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1. Fiction, American

Will L. Monroe

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LEGEND OF BUCKS COUNTY.

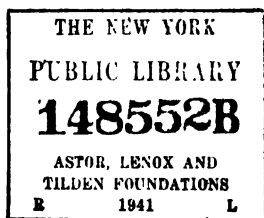
A NOVEL

—BY—

CALEB E. WRIGHT,
AUTHOR OF "MARCUS BLAIR," "ON THE
LACKAWANNA," ETC.

B. MCGINTY.
PRINTER AND PUBLISHER,
DOYLESTOWN, PA.
1887.

T



I dedicate this volume to my brethren of the
Bucks County Bar ; with whom I have had pleas-
ant professional and social intercourse for the half
part of a century.

C. E. W.

Doylestown, Pa., April, 1887.

Forby, Oct 1941

LEGEND OF BUCKS COUNTY.

CHAPTER I.

"The buds unfold to glossy leaves,
And blooms the dogwood on the hill;
Cheery beneath the mossy eaves
Is heard the twittering swallow's trill;
The flow'rs peep forth amidst the grass,
And yield their perfume to the tread;
O'erhead the feather'd squadrons pass
To Arctic frith and downy bed."

An exciting event in neighborhood life, an hundred years ago, was the school exhibition. It occurred at the close of the winter term, and drew crowds of people from the vicinity, in all directions around. There were dialogues and recitations, besides competition in the various branches of education, taught during the session. The tent scene between Brutus and Cassius was not omitted; and swords being brought into play, became the moving cause of high excitement. The poetry of Cowper, Akenside, Gay, and other English celebrities, furnished their share in the entertainment.

An entire day being set apart for the exercises, the visitors, as well as actors, brought with them each their noonday lunch, which was eaten under the trees at the time of recess. The boys and girls came in their best holiday attire; and happy were the humble parents in interchange of mutual commendations touching their offspring.



One of these enjoyable events took place on the verdant banks of the Neshaminy, during the turbulent days of the Revolutionary War. It was in the bright season of springtime, and a large concourse had assembled. The saddle-horses of those in attendance, hitched to the branches of the trees, filled the grove that compassed the school house. In that day there were fewer carriages than saddles, as the former had not then supplanted the other means of travel.

Amongst those allured to the spot was Miss Clarke. After a few years absence, she had come to visit the scene of her former labors, having taught in this same edifice in other days. She had been a great favorite with both parents and scholars. Her arrival was unnoticed by the crowd, for just then an unusual stir and commotion was prevailing. She came just at the inception of a boys' foot race. This was to be the close of the days festivities.

The course selected for the race was calculated to be a test of endurance as well as speed. It was the fourth of a mile in circuit, and the runners were to go twice around. A half a mile, it was thought, would determine the best staying powers of the competitors. Twelve urchins, supposed not to be in excess of twelve years, with hats and coats, as well as foot gear laid aside, were drawn up at the score. Corporal Phineas Girty, a man



well known in the community, large of size, ruddy in complexion and with curling, sandy hair, and lately returned from the army with a gunshot wound, was performing the duties of judge. With an active zeal, he was busy marshaling the runners.

"It shall be a fair and square matter," said he. "The ends of justice shall be met. No jockey tricks or scrub practices on this course. All above-board, as set down in the rules. The best nag takes the prize."

"There it is, boys," he continued, pointing to a new suit of boy's clothing; "all complete, from the cap to the stockings; and the lad of the highest mettle and best wind takes all. A prize worth the winning, let me tell you. The women held a meeting on the commodities, and they're of prime stuff and made up in tip of the fashion. Come on, now, my hearties, toe the mark and wait for the word. When you hear Timothy Smith say *go*, let yourselves out, and put to it for life, and the garments. None over twelve allowed to compete. Twice round the track without stopping; and the best horse, (boy, I mean,) takes the purse."

"Well, now, judge," expostulated a small man, who had a boy in line; "I say, wats the use o' layin' down rules, 'cept they be kerried out? That's the pint I make. Ef you fix on twelve

year, why don't you keep out them as is over and beyent twelve year?"

"Who is over twelve?" demanded the judge of the race.

"There's Tite Lomison. Ain't he?"

"What's that?" called out the boy's mother, starting up. "What's that? My boy, Titus, beyond twelve? Who says it?"

"I do—I, Granny Lomison," answered the other. "And'll stand to it; I will, till sundown. Yes, more'n twelve year, ef a day."

"Now, Jude Parker, you poor, envious creeter," returned the old woman; "you know well enough that's a—a—no such thing. You ort to be ashamed o' yourself. My Titus over twelve! Don't I know when he was bornt? Wasn't it the year arter the yaller fever?—eh?"

"Don't tell me," returned the man. "Look at him—legs long as a man's this minute. He'll never see twelve year agin, ef he lives till doomsday. Ef he won the race, could he wear them boy's clothes? Could he get his shanks in them little breeches? Answer me that, old woman."

"Well, I won't jaw with you, Jude Parker. I hold myself a mite too high for that. But I'll leave it with the judge. And you know, Phineas Girty, when 'twas the child was bornt. Wasn't it

the year arter the yaller fever, and the identical day of your hog killing?"

"Just so, Granny Lomison," returned Phineas. "I remember it well; that was the time. Mr. Parker, you'll have to back down; the old woman has you foul. So keep your place in line, Titus. And now, lads, be ready for the word."

The racers were about to receive the signal, when the judge interposed. He discovered something in the crowd that arrested his attention.

"Why, all in good time, Mother Madden," he said, advancing to a quiet demeanored old lady; "I had well nigh forgotten you. And I see you have your boy with you. I'm glad of it. Bon shall enter for the heat. Come out here, my young gentleman, and see what your legs can do for you. Come on, now, my lark."

A general titter prevailed, as he undertook to pull forth a very ragged little lad of some eight summers. The titter broke out in an audible laugh as the shirt sleeve of the boy, by which he was dragged, gave way at the shoulder, and slipped entirely off over his hand.

"A shame! it's a shame!" cried out a little girl, about the same age as the boy, and who, for industry and punctuality, had taken the first honor; and had her brow decorated with the wreath of triumph. "I say I won't have Bon abused."

"That's right, little Florence Craft," said the judge, placing his hand on her head. "Stand up for your friends, my little queen of hearts. Always for fair play. It was only an accident, my little jewel. Bon sha'n't be abused while I'm on hand. And furthermore, he shall have his place in the run. So come on, lad, and put your toe here on the mark."

"Yes, Bon," said the girl, "you must do as Mr. Girty says."

The reluctant boy yielded, especially after this injunction. But it was with a trifle of bad grace. He seemed aware of the sorry figure he displayed amongst the others, better dressed, and his seniors in age. A fierce expression was apparent in his eye, as he looked down on his bare feet, his coarse trousers and the single sleeve of the homespun shirt. However, the judge patted him on the bare shoulder, and told him a better suit than any on the ground was awaiting the lad who won.

The signal was at length given, and the thirteen bounded off. They went away with an encouraging shout from the crowd.

Trivial as it might seem, yet a common interest and unquestioned excitement was occasioned by the contest. All eyes eagerly watched the course. The runners kept well together during the first quarter of the heat. Titus Lomison, with his

long stride, had rather the best of it. He was several yards in the lead. And little Bon Madden in the rear.

"Take that little wretch out of the race when he comes round," one advised the judge. "The old woman will die in fits, else."

"He makes the whole thing ridiculous," said a young woman, whose brother was amongst the foremost. "Don't you think so, ma?"

"I think old Mother Madden had better put him in the cradle and rock him to sleep," answered the mother.

"Poor little fellow," said a kind-hearted matron; "I fear those little legs will not hold out much longer."

Not much change occurred during the running of the second quarter, which brought the boys to the starting point, making one-half of the race. As they drew on to this place, they were hailed by the outpouring of many throats. Fathers and mothers, uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters, were noisy with shouts and words of encouragement.

"Pull to it, Bill!" shouted one.

"Go it, Tom!" came from another.

"Beat 'em, Ephe—beat 'em, or I'll skin you!" roared his father, Mr. Allen.

"That's you, sonny; you're the boy," from the blacksmith.

"Shin it—shin it, Hank! Shin it, I tell you!" the tinman yelled.

"Buckle to it, Jim! you've got 'em sure," by the mason.

"O, my boy! my boy!" screamed old Granny Lomison, clapping her hands. "My boy! Tite! Tite! Tite!"

This was unpropitious. Titus, still in the lead, turned his head to know what was wanted, causing one long limb to lap round its fellow. He fell full length on his stomach; two of the racers bounding over him.

"Heavens and earth!" the mother ejaculated, and covered her tearful eyes with her trembling hands.

On went the racers. The pace was telling on the panting coursers, after this tug of the fourth of a mile. As they entered the third quarter, their relative positions changed somewhat. It began to appear who had bottom, and who had not. The scrubs began to lag. And at the end of the third quarter, three were decidedly in the van. The first, by a few yards, was Ephraim Allen, the shoemaker's son. The second, Hank Skillet, son of the tinsmith. And a bare yard behind him, the little lad with the single-sleeved

shirt. To the disgust and astonishment of many, it was so; and there was no help for it.

With the entrance on the fourth and last quarter, feeling was getting up to fever heat. There was a tumult and confusion at the score. Not a tongue silent, nor hand still. Hats were waving and canes twirling in the air. The women were equally turbulent with those of the other sex. Handkerchiefs were swung aloft; and Mrs. Skillet, forgetting to bring hers, had jerked off her cap and was twirling it over her bare head. The mother of Ephe, red as a cherry, was almost dancing a jig. All the Skilletts, big and little, wild with anxious emotion, were calling on Hank.

But in all the crowd, few showed demonstrations in favor of little Bon Madden, with his naked arm and one suspender. One of the few, however, was little Florence Craft, decked with the triumphal wreath; now trembling like a leaf, her eyes filled with tears, and her hands beckoning the type of humble poverty to press the contest to victory. And, in violation of strict propriety, the judge of the race, supposed to be blind as the goddess of justice and unswerved by partiality, was now cheering Mother Madden's boy, with full freedom of lung and hand. Another of Bon's supporters was Miss Clarke. For the more available view, she had mounted the top rail of the

fence, and fell nothing short of the others about her in vocal and physical demonstrations.

The crisis was near at hand. On came the panting trio, well blown as they were. About midway in the last quarter, Hank Skillet fell behind. An audible groan escaped his mother. Clapping her hand on her heart, she sank down on the turf. Some of the younger Skillets burst into crying fits. Father Skillet was so mad he couldn't speak.

The home-stretch, grave of so many fortunes, was reached. It was tight work between Ephraim Allen and his bare-armed competitor. The former was showing symptoms of spent force. He was panting in a distressing manner. Bon was panting, too; but elasticity was yet in his limbs.

"Runs like a killdeer," exclaimed Girty. "Come ahead, nonpareil! Here's a full suit waiting for you. Hold on, lad—hold on."

"Knuckle down to it, Ephe, my boy!" cried old Allen.

"Two to one on the shirt sleeve!" roared the judge.

"Clip it, Ephe—clip it, I tell you."

"Bon Madden against the field!" shouted Girty. "Look at his stride! Gathers quick as a trap. Muscle does it."

"Look out, Ephe! Look sharp! Dig into it, lad!"

"Hurrah for Bon!" the judge exclaimed.

"Hurrah for Ephe!" Allen responded.

"Come ahead, Bon!"

"Down to it, Ephe!"

"Bon!"

"Ephe!"

"Bon Madden wins by a neck!" shouted the judge, when the score was reached.

"Botheration take you, Ephe; he's beat you after all," cried Allen.

"Hurrah for the champion!" roared the judge, throwing up his hat. "Limb, wind and muscle! Crack of the day! Done against wind and tide! Bon's the colt that takes the prize. Hurrah!"

The winner, beyond question, merited a more general burst of acclamation than he received. But he had friends in the assemblage, nevertheless. As Corporal Girty turned to snatch up the panting boy in a cordial embrace, he found himself forestalled by another. Little Florence had one arm around the champion's neck, and with the hand of the other was wiping the perspiration from his face.

"O, dear! O, dear! I'm so glad of it, Bon! I'm so glad," she was ejaculating. "O, Bon! I

love you more than ever! How you *did* run, didn't you?"

The panting lad answered her with a look of gratitude. He hadn't breath left for speech. He nodded his head earnestly.

"He did, indeed, run well," interposed Deborah Haley, a lady in Quaker dress, patting him on the head. "And I am pleased he has some friends in the company. That thee has so bravely contested the race, gives me pleasure."

"Why, Bon," called out the Corporal, "look up there on the fence! It's your old teacher. It's Miss Clarke! How glad we are to see her again, Bon. I'll have her down from there in a hurry."

In a trice his strong arms had lifted the lady from the fence rider, and almost carried her to the boy champion.

"My dear little fellow, I must kiss you," she said.

"I thought so," added Corporal Girty.

"There!" continued the teacher, giving the lad half a dozen audible smacks. "That's for your good running, and in memory of other days. It's the first race I ever took interest in; and I must confess, little Bon, I wouldn't have had you beaten for the world."

"In which I concur," said the judge.

"I'm sorry to show any preference, Mr. Girty—"

"With you again, Miss Clarke," he said, interrupting.

"All the contesting parties were my scholars, formerly, and I'm sure I love them all. But, indeed, I wished Bon to win."

"Of the same mind, Miss Clarke," said the other.

"But, my friend, I don't see Mother Madden here. Where is she all this while?"

It was some time before search for her resulted in success. It was finally ascertained that she had crept away behind an angle of the fence, and with bowed head, was weeping like a child. Miss Clarke put her arms about the old lady, and did what she could to allay the further shedding of tears, though tears of inexpressible joy. After a little space, the poor widow had her boy in her arms. About the time her embrace had relaxed, Corporal Girty called attention to a discovery.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed; "off with your hats, neighbors. Here is the Commander in Chief! God preserve your Excellency!"

All uncovered at once, and bowed their heads in salutation. A man in relief military dress, mounted on a fine horse, raised his chapeau, and responded to the act of reverence by a graceful bow.

"This greeting, ladies and gentlemen, and my little friends," he said, "affords me the highest

sense of pleasure. In return, I extend you all a friendly salutation. The contest just over, I have witnessed with a feeling of interest, common with your own. The reward of merit awaiting the victor, was well won."

"Truth, General," said Corporal Girty; "and if the request of a man wounded under your colors at White Plains has any weight, may I beg you to dismount and present the prize to the winner?"

"I will, most readily," returned the Commander of the Union Armies, descending from the saddle and handing the reins of his bridle to an attendant at his side.

"I am at your service, friends, and shall perform the required duty willingly. Let me know, fellow soldier, what the prize is."

"Here it is, General," answered Girty, producing the suit. "A full rig from top to toe. None too good, let me say, for the lad who won them."

"And the lad's name if you please?"

"Bon Madden, your Excellency. I doubt if you will find its equal on all the muster rolls of your entire army."

"I know nothing of merit or demerit in the matter of names, fellow soldier," said the other. "That of Bon Madden has an agreeable sound in my ears. I may, however, remember the ex-

cellence of his performance, when the name fades away.

"Come here, my little man, and give me your hand. At your age I delighted in athletic feats also. I carry with me, and always shall, the memory of many trials of speed. But I fail to call to mind a triumph more signal than that you have this day achieved. My pleasure is therefore enhanced by the thought that you so amply merit the gift I am commissioned to present.

"I think I perceive in this little fellow," continued the great man, surveying him with a benevolent expression of face, "a bud of promise. I like these facial outlines. And this eye, whose spirit would become a better garb than seems to have fallen to his lot. This superior one I have the honor to present, is in better keeping.

"And now, in putting it in your possession, my fine little lad, I take the liberty of adding to it a guerdon of my own. I supplement the prize by adding to it this English guinea."

"George Washington," were the next words that broke the prevailing silence, uttered in the calm and musical cadence of Deborah Haley, the Quaker lady heretofore mentioned; "I crave pardon for a few words. Thy presence, so unexpected, and thy words of cheer to the humble, so acceptable in our ears, demand from us all the homage

of our hearts. Though I favor not thy present calling, and am far from approbating the profession of arms, yet I am thankful God has placed the destinies of our people in the hands of one, who, I verily believe, would in all ways walk after the requirements of His divine will. If it be that all 'they that take the sword shall perish with the sword,' it is my prayer, the day be far distant, or never to dawn, that such extremity be thine. Perchance it may be, in the Divine ruling, thou art raised up our Gideon. If so, may his battle-cry fall on the ears of those arrayed against thee; and are seeking the continuation of oppressive rule. And may the peace and prosperity our distracted land needs in such dear degree, be compassed by the means God has committed to thy hand. With a heart softened by the gentleness of thy bearing, and Christian spirit displayed before us this day, I would, as a minister of the prince of peace, bid thee prosper in the way He may direct."

Out of respect for the speaker, the Commander in Chief removed his chapeau at the commencement of her address, and remained uncovered until its close. Then, giving expression of his thanks for the message, bid good-day to the course, remounted his war horse, and rode away.



CHAPTER II.

"Thou think'st 'tis much that this contentious storm
Invades us to the skin."

"Busy as a hen, Miss Clarke," said Corporal Girty the following morning to this lady, pausing at his barn door; "but as you are steering for Antioch, I must drop all and go with you. There's but one spot in all this world better than the rest, and its name is Antioch. Wait till I slip into a better rig, Miss Clarke, and I'll be with you."

"I shall feel it to be an honor, Corporal," said the lady.

Antioch, the name given a small place on a rise of ground, consisting of a few cleared acres, surrounded on all sides by native timber, was the residence of Mother Madden. Here her late husband had made his purchase of some fifty acres, built his log house, cleared off six or eight acres of his purchase, and died. The widow remained; and, being childless, occupied the tenement alone. The kindness of her neighbors now and then came to her aid, in the cultivation of her small fields.

A noble spring, gushing from beneath a wide-spreading white oak, was at her door; and the forest trees supplied her with abundant fuel. There was a small shed for the cow, with a loft overhead in which to store her winter's supply of hay. She had two cats and a dog; her agreeable

companions in this retired spot. True, for a few years past, there had been increase in number, by the addition of little Bon.

He had his room on the ground floor, adjoining that of the old lady. His water wheel, made of a shingle, and resting on two pegs stuck in the ground, was turned by the rivulet passing by the dwelling. Here was also his play house, of rude construction, wherein he and little Florence Craft, whose father lived near by, passed the blissful summer hours. Besides, the boy had a dove-cot, put up by Corporal Girty, at the gable of the shed, where his tame pigeons nested and bred. The single pair, furnished him by the Corporal, had been the progenitors of a large flock.

Instead of going directly to Antioch, the Corporal escorted his lady friend by a circuitous route, in order to visit his deerlick.

"This," said he, when they arrived there, "is to me a noted spot. I may say it is sacred ground."

"In connection with little Bon? I don't know that I am familiar with the particulars."

"A very peculiar and complicated sort of an event, Miss Clarke. And if a novelist had it by a sure grip, he'd make his fortune out of it. Let me tell you in brief:

"I was up here after swamp huckleberries, and found sticking to a bramble, just there by that

stone, a bit of linen, about the size of your two hands. It was a very dirty and disgusting little bit of cloth; but concluding it would do to swab out the pan of my rifle, I put it in my pocket. Pretty soon I discovered tracks in the mud; tracks made by very small feet, and bare at that. Then a sort of path, leading to this fallen tree. It's a hollow buttonwood, you see. There were the leaves inside, just as you see them now. I had a curiosity to stir them up a little with the muzzle of my gun. Bless your eyes! as I did so, out pops a head—a child's head. And a mighty fierce face it had; with eyes staring at me like those of an owl. It was evidently a boy, I conjectured. His hair was a curiosity. A tangled mess of burs, nettles and bits of bark.

"When I spoke to him, he put on a frown that was amazing. Putting in my hand to draw him out, he snapped at it like a hungry cur. I won't detain you by telling how I got him out, but I did."

"How was he dressed, Corporal Girty?"

"Perhaps the least said on that subject, the better. But he had something on. I should think one-half to three-fourths of a shirt. I can't be certain as to quantity."

"What was his age?"

"You couldn't, Miss Clarke, put that question

to a man who knows less about it. What should a bachelor, at my time of life, know about children's ages? Had he been a colt, by looking at his teeth I could have told within a month. I should think, however, from the little to be expected of an unmarried man, he might have been two, three or four years old. But don't place much confidence in my judgment, Miss Clarke."

"And his name?"

"Bon."

"Only that?"

"Just Bon. I besought and abjured him for the second name a full half hour. It was all labor lost. Never to this hour has that other name been found out. The second name he goes by now, I gave him myself. Not much of a gift, to be sure; but one he stood in need of.

"Well, I took the youngster to my house, though much against his will. I borrowed a shirt and pair of small breeches, for the time being, until something could be fitted up to serve him.

"The poor masters thought to sell him for his keep to the lowest bidder. This I out and out set down my foot against; square. I told them, in plain English, as long as I could hold a plowtail, or had land sufficient for a potato patch, the boy should not go upon the town. That I regarded him, in a measure, as bone of my bone and flesh

of my flesh, and would be his father until another might turn up."

"Corporal Girty, I honor you for it."

"Thank you, Miss Clarke. I've met several heretofore, who somehow entertain for me a higher opinion than I do myself. But that's not to the point.

"I arranged with Mother Madden to board and lodge my boy, and allow him six of the warm months for schooling. So he entered her domain of Antioch, and has been there since. The greatest blessing, the old lady affirms, that ever befel her. I don't suppose there is one-fourth money sufficient in the State treasury to take that lad out of her hands.

"And another thing. May be you'll think me a goose for telling it. But, Miss Clarke, as sure as daylight, this was a turning point in my own life. I found all of a sudden I had become, as it were, double. There was another person in me besides myself. I was Corporal Girty and something more. I had a boy. Since then I've lived and wrought with and for an object. I've had peace of mind, good sleep o' nights, and a capital appetite. Not a copper do I waste in folly or rum; not an hour in idleness. And, when I go up to Antioch and take that little fellow on my knee, I wouldn't change places with King George the Third."

Just here the first drops of a shower fell upon the pair. Looking up, they were surprised to find themselves overspread by a dark rain-cloud.

"No shelter but in there, Miss Clarke," said the Corporal. "You can't stand up in Bon's quarters, but may sit. At least, rest on one elbow. Hurry in; the storm is on us."

She quickly obeyed the mandate. But being in, and facing towards the opening, perceived the other walking away.

"Why, stop—stop, Corporal," she called after him. "Don't think of going away. You must come in here, too. There is plenty of room."

"Glad you think so," returned he. "In fact, I'm getting damp."

"Come right in. The rain increases. I think we can manage to occupy without inconvenience."

"Make yourself small as you can, then, Miss Clarke. In truth, I've a good deal more bulk than needful. But I won't crowd."

"Now, if this were put in a book," he remarked after a space, "I don't think our neighbors would believe it."

"Necessity is not over critical, Corporal Girty. And I don't know what man of the present age would waste time in describing it. Don't the rain fall on your feet?"

"But a trifle. They can stand a little more."

"Come further in, Corporal. There is space enough."

"I shall crowd you, Miss Clarke. I'm not afraid of water."

"It occurs to me," said the Corporal, after a minute of silence, "that in the year you were with us, I didn't learn what part of the land you came from. Can you inform me?"

"Readily. You have heard of a city called New London?"

"I should think so. Didn't the division of the Army I was in march through it when leaving the Eastern States? Yes; and wasn't it at that place I attended a clam-bake? And furthermore saw, with my own eyes, the greatest feat known to Yankeedom? That is, for a man to eat clams till knee deep in the shells? I saw it accomplished by a divinity student. He was made bishop afterward."

"Well, New London was my birthplace."

"I was not far off, then," said the other. "I came from Stonington, same county and State. Only some fifteen miles away. Why, Miss Clarke, we be brethren. I am delighted. I am sure of it as you've that little mole on your chin."

When the rain abated, the pair set out for Antioch. Before getting there another shower overtook them. In a moment the Corporal had jerked

off his coat, and wrapped it around his companion. Clapping his straw hat, of the extent of a parasol, over her bonnet.

"It's all I can do," said he.

"Why, now, Corporal Girty, I must say—"

"No. Don't say a word. Just pocket the affront and be silent. Do you think a New London girl has no claims on a fellow countryman? I know perfectly well what I am about."

"You place me under many obligations."

"You'll find it an easy matter to discharge them, Miss Clarke. I am glad to have such a debtor."

When the dripping pair reached Antioch, they found Mother Madden and Bon busy over the history of the Hebrew boy, Joseph. Both were delighted by the entrance of the visitors; Bon with the beam of animation on his finely cut features of face; and Mother Madden in the calm dignity and demeanor of her religious sect.

"Remove thy wraps, quickly," she said to Miss Clarke; "and draw close up to the hearth. I perceive thee is thoroughly wet. Bon will add a few more sticks to the fire. Phineas, thee needs drying also. Come near the fire; and both make yourselves comfortable. It was a hard shower to be out in."

"We are very thankful to find such good quar-

ters, Mother Madden," said her female guest. "You and Bon are both well, I perceive."

"Providence favors us with health, my dear Molly. I think it was by that name we formerly addressed thee? I beg forgiveness if in error."

"Molly, it is," returned the other. "It has been my cognomen always. I hope my friends will continue its use."

"I shall always like the name for the owner's sake," said Girty.

"I am sensible of the compliment, Corporal," returned Molly, "and esteem it the more, believing you to be sincere."

"Right," answered he.

"Thee has enjoyed good health?" inquired Mother Madden.

"Good as the bleak winds of the Sound permits," Molly answered. "In general, I may say it has been excellent. How this lad grows! And what a source of comfort he must be to you."

"A priceless blessing, indeed. I hope it may not be inconsistent to say it, but he makes my last days my best days. Of a surety, he seems a boon sent to make bright my sunset years. I could not get on without him. He brings in the wood; fetches the water; drives the cow to pasture; runs on all my errands, and reads for me out of God's

holy volume. It was kind of thee, Phineas, to put him under my roof.

"And now, Molly, I trust thee has come to stay?"

"I was waited on last night by the school committee, who engaged me for the summer term."

"*Did* they?" exclaimed Corporal Girty, with a start. "It's the best news I ever heard. Bon, my boy, you'll be in the hands of your old teacher again. We shall be knee deep in clover."

"And do the new clothes fit?" inquired Miss Clarke of the boy, changing the subject of remark.

"Thee shall see, Molly," the old lady made answer. "Bon can array himself in a few minutes."

"Let him, by all means," said the visitor.

It was not long before the prize winner stepped forth from his bed room. The articles of attire were just right; and the old lady's eyes twinkled at beholding the admiration they inspired. The Corporal examined the pieces separately, accompanying the inspection with appropriate comments. It was a day of great things with the wearer.

"And now," said Miss Clarke, "I would like to look at General Washington's gold coin."

"Thee will have to wait some years for the enjoyment of that privilege, Molly," replied Mother

Madden. "It has disappeared through the lid of Bon's treasure box."

"Treasure box?"

"Bon's treasure box, my dear. And that is to be opened when the owner reaches his twenty-first year."

"You shall see it, Miss Clarke," said the boy, starting into his room; and whence he soon returned with the box in hand.

"Here is the hole I drop my money through, you see."

"That box," said Corporal Girty, "is a device of mine. It contains the garment Bon had on when I dislodged him from his quarters at the deerlick, as well as divers sums of money put in it from time to time. The lid, you observe, is securely nailed down; and Bon has pledged me his sacred word of honor not to open it or disturb the contents before coming of lawful age. The garment was put in to show, when he becomes a man of means and consequence, what he sprang from."

"That's it, Miss Clarke," said the boy.

"Stand by your word of promise, Bon," urged Miss Molly.

"Yes. I will."

"That's right. You can't go wrong in following any counsel of Corporal Girty's."

"Just what I always tell him," added Mother Madden.

"I beg leave to retire, until you have finished this branch of the business," said Girty: "My presence may prevent your fully expressing your views."

It is not intended to report in full the conversation of the occasion. The visitors remained to dine with the matron of the house. During the afternoon Corporal Girty left. Miss Clarke stayed with the widow all night.

But tedious and perplexing were the hours she passed through. It was a troublous time. All efforts to sleep unavailing. There was but a restless tossing on the couch. A strain was on the mental faculties; and anxious emotions swelled the heart. A looking over the expanse of an unknown future; and a calling up of the incidents of the past. How was that future to be fathomed? Hope pointed out its golden path. Doubt blocked the way of entrance upon it.

"I can stand this no longer," she exclaimed, sitting up, with a gleam in her weary eyes. "I decide it now and forever. Let all wavering go to the winds. I've thought it through to the end. There's but the one course. Molly Clarke! *he's* the man!"

In five minutes time, the mantle of sweet slumber had fallen on the agitated frame.

CHAPTER III.

"The rogue ne'er feels the halter draw,
With good opinion of the law."

During Howe's military occupancy of the city of Philadelphia, the County of Bucks was, in a measure, debatable ground. Parties of armed bands of both armies, scouts and foraging gangs, were flitting hither and thither throughout its territory. The inhabitants amongst whom they moved, were divided in sentiment. A few deemed it proper to still adhere to the British crown. The majority, however, gave support to the Union cause. Incipient rebellion is always a vexed question. All hangs on the final result. Patriotism, if successful. Treason, on failure.

At this juncture of time, the prospects of the Union cause were gloomy. The battles of Brandywine and Germantown had depressed the ardor of the struggling patriots. While on the other hand the adherents of the English monarch were elated. But the Colonial Congress and the Commander in Chief stood firm. The late mischance on battle fields admonished them of danger. At the same time it inspired within them the zeal of desperation. No effort was spared, no sacrifice withheld. Their "lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor," were cast upon the die.

The tories, as those favoring the royal cause

were termed, were ever busy. All the aid and comfort in their power to bestow was freely given. Their cupidity was awakened by the glitter of English gold; an agent denied the adherents of the impoverished colonists. Ample means of payment were assured to all furnishing supplies to the enemy, and the foes of freedom were therefore alert. Cattle, grain and farm products of all kinds, were carried by them within the British lines.

There were many individuals engaged in traffic with the English forces, unrestrained by dictates of honor or honesty, who scoured the district, stealing and carrying off the products of the farmers. Cattle, and especially horses, were objects of attraction; and these were purloined wherever the thief could lay hands on them.

That part of Bucks, especially connected with our narrative, was infested by many of these marauders; and particularly by a low vagabond called Theophilus Ratburn. He was a notorious pest; and, having a degree of cunning and shrewdness, had always escaped arrest. The scenes of his midnight depredations were usually the hen-roosts, milk houses and cellars of the inhabitants. Lard, bacon, butter, cheese, chickens and eggs, were his principal articles of commerce. Having a horse and cart, he was enabled to carry off large quantities to supply the mess-gangs of the foe.

Fortunately, the day Corporal Girty was at

Mother Madden's, this marauding vagabond was captured—horse, cart and pilfered stores. The news flew with quick celerity throughout the neighborhood. Every tool was dropped and labors suspended. A crowd, especially of the more common order, and well grown boys, assembled. The captive was marched into a dark hollow on the banks of the Neshaminy for trial.

An unfledged lawyer, known in common parlance as bush-whacker, by the name of Cobe Stott, assumed the post of judge. A jury was empaneled, and the trial proceeded. Leaving the examination for a short space, we recur to the doings of Corporal Girty.

This gentleman, departing from his female friend at the widow's, set out on his return home. He walked the woodland path alone, in musing mood. There was something on his mind. He paused once or twice in his walk, as if to concentrate his thoughts.

"Corporal Girty," he said to himself at length; "I've a word with you. Sit down here a moment and listen. Don't be offended with the liberty I take. It is all intended for your good."

"Go on," said the Corporal, taking his seat on a boulder.

"Thank you. I'm glad you open the way. Well, Corporal, I think I've discovered that you

are, as I may say, in for it. I have had an eye on you. You may not have been aware of it, but such is the fact.

"And now, let me say, (all in kindness, mark you,) you had better pause in your career. I say it as a friend. You seem ignorant of the fact that you are going it blind; and may upset your apple cart before you are aware of it. Let me say in confidence, there's a reef in your way. My opinion is you had better drop anchor before shipwreck."

The Corporal cocked his ear, the better to take in what might follow.

"Go on," he said. "I'm all attention."

"Very well. Just as you desire. Now put this down, in black and white, as I may say. I think you're aiming a trifle *too high*. Don't shake your head. A trifle too high, I repeat. Your ball will fall short of the target."

"Explain," demanded the Corporal.

"I'll do so, my friend. For it is the friendship so long existing between us, that justifies my interference. I take advantage of the relation to open my mind in full."

"I'm listening," said Girty.

"Well, here is the upshot. You are climbing a sandbank. The top can't be reached. Let me state the proof. Didn't I see you touch the deli-

cate hand of the New Londoner in the old button-wood? Accidental, of course. Such things always are. And didn't I behold you sit by the hour together, goggling at the damsel, here at Mother Madden's?"

"I own up," returned Girty. "Proceed."

"My opinion is, it won't do, Corporal. She's too much above you. She's educated—well born—full of ambition, and moves in a higher circle. Do you have the folly to suppose she will mix up with a common tiller of the soil? A cultivator of turnips and handler of calves and young pigs? Look at it!"

"I observe," said the Corporal.

"Could those tapered fingers ever nestle in a palm like yours? Could ever a Puritan lass, with her head full of grand ideas about the Mayflower, and founding of nations and empires, put up with a turner of clods? Pull down your flag, and withdraw from the field, my best of friends. I can't stand by and see you slain in cold blood. Now, let's set out again for home."

"Much obliged," said Girty, rising upon his feet. "Glad you've opened your mind. Don't fear I shall be offended. Any advice you have at any time to offer, I shall receive thankfully. It has been a long time I've been honored with your friendship. Always speak out. I thank you once more for what you have said to me."

The Corporal, yet ruminating on the words of caution that had been addressed to him, arrived at the dark hollow just as the jury had returned a verdict of guilty. The judge advocate, sitting on a stump, was about to pronounce sentence on the convict. His honor was not a full-bred attorney, as we have said; but in attendance on the county Courts had picked up a smattering of judicial phrases, that he was always proud to exhibit. He frequently ventilated his legal lore in attendance as counsel at justices' Courts and before referees; an occupation followed by him in connection with that of making guns and tinkering clocks. He now assumed a grave face and solemn aspect.

"Theophilus Ratburn, *alias* Theophilus Ratsbane, otherwise, and more commonly called Theoff Rat, stand up." Thus he began.

"The Court is about to perform its last and solemn duty. If you have any thing to say why sentence should not now be pronounced upon you, say it, or else forever after hold your peace."

The convict shook his head, and remained silent.

"Very well. It is a legal maxim laid by the fathers of our profession, that you may lead a horse to water, but can't make him drink. We can offer you the privilege to speak, but can't make you talk.

"Theophilus Rat, at this solemn hour, the Court has it to say, that she is fully satisfied with the finding of the jury. We are at a loss to see how twelve intelligent and respectable citizens of the bailiwick could have done otherwise. In fact, it was their duty under our charge; and any other verdict would have been set aside instanter.

"The testimony in the case fully disclosed, (what everybody knew before,) that you have been a pest in our midst, and a blot on the body politic. Witnesses were called in the case to-day, only in matter of form, as the jury would have rendered the same verdict without them. I had this from several of them before being empaneled. The time has now come when you had better turn your thoughts within, and lookout for breakers. A retrospect of your past life can't afford much peace to your mind. What has that life been? You have set at naught all laws, human and divine. You have trampled on the sacred obligations of citizenship and stolen broadcast the possessions of others. Of the sentiments of honor and honesty, you are as ignorant as the babe unborn. But justice, that has at least one eye always open, has laid clutches on you at last.

"Don't lay the flattering unction to your soul, that people of the coming generations will say you had not a fair trial. No, sir. If ever the balances of justice were held even, they have been

this day. No spot is on our ermine. If the Court leaned a hair's breadth, it was in your favor. An able counsel defended you. His eloquent appeals in your behalf yet reverberate in the judicial ear. But it is one of the beneficent features of the law, from the days of my Lord Coke upon Littleton down to this, that a scoundrel has no rights in a Court of Justice. And hence the time-honored maxim, that it is better to hang twenty honest men, than let one villain escape.

"I would, by no means, Theoff Rat, say a word to harrow up your feelings in these, your last hours. But would, instead, pour oil on your head. It is the virtue and beauty of an impartial judge to show mercy. Your guilty conscience alone is load enough for you to carry. But let that pass.

"If you have not yet made your will, it may be the worse for your nest of—(RATS, I was about to say,) but mean young ones. In the spirit of leniency we allow you, if you choose, to make one, now and here, *nuncupative*. I pause for an answer."

The prisoner again gave a negative shake of the head.

"All right. We now perform the last and most distasteful of all duties of a judge. Prepare to receive the sentence of this honorable Court. It is that you, Theophilus Ratburn, otherwise The-

ophilus Ratsbane, otherwise called Theophilus Rat, be taken hence to the place of execution, and that you there, in your own proper person, be done for as the law directs. Sheriff, he is in your custody."

The machinery provided to carry out the sentence of the court martial was an empty molasses hogshead, recently relieved of its contents. The hoops at one end were removed, and the head taken out. A circular hole, large enough to receive a man's neck, was cut between two of the pieces. When the malefactor was put in the hogshead, with his neck in this opening, the hoops were replaced. All that was therefore visible was the hairless pate of the pilferer.

Those present were now formed in order of battle; each with an egg in hand, taken from the culprit's cart.

"Attention, men!" cried the officer of the day. "You will fire by sections of twelve, and as the word is given. You are to advance within ten paces, fire and fall back.

"Attention! Front rank, forward, march. Ready, aim, fire!"

A dozen eggs flew through the air. Two of them missed both head and hogshead. Two others took effect on the cask alone. The other eight took the bald pate, pointblank. The victim shook his head

like a dog with a fly in his ear. A general shout hailed the excellence of the broadside.

One platoon thus advanced after another, until the bespattered head became a spectacle. The broken yolks turned the scalp from a white to a tawny hue. The little hair growing at the base of the felon's cranium was filled with broken shells. And his eyes, ears and nose choked to overflowing. It was not until one egg, probably of the former season, and fearful in perfume, hit him on the temple and besprinkled his entire face, that he bellowed for mercy.

A short consultation was held. When a decision was arrived at, instant action was taken. The cask, with its living freight, was tumbled down the bank of the stream, and floated off upon its current.



CHAPTER IV.

"Lay down the axe; fling by the spade;
Leave in its track the toiling plow;
The rifle and the bayonet blade
For arms like yours were fitter now;
And let the hands that ply the pen
Quit the light task, and learn to wield
The horseman's crooked brand, and rein
The charger on the battle-field."

But a day or two after the capture and trial of Theophilus Rat, the various roads in the neighborhood were cumbered with squads of the American militia, flying in hot haste towards the Delaware. A detachment of Hone's forces, flushed with success in their attack at the Crooked Billet, were in close pursuit. Better armed and mounted than their adversaries, they were enabled to capture, wound and slaughter many of their number.

The road passing the residence of Reuben Haley was one of the highways over which the fugitives were hastening. The Quaker and his wife stood on their porch, with feelings of keen commiseration, beholding the spectacle. Their ears were assailed by the shouts of the victors, the occasional report of fire arms, and the ribald jargon of blasphemy incident to martial conflict.

A poor militia officer, of humble rank, wounded and bleeding, and overcome with fatigue, halted at the gate and begged for a glass of water.

"Thee shall have something better, friend," said the Quaker's wife, and handed him a bowl of milk that was near at hand.

Whilst the man, in a tremor of suffering, was holding the vessel to his lips, a British dragoon dashed up, struck the bowl from the man's mouth, gave him a sabre wound on the head, and was drawing his pistol to finish the tragedy, when another of the British detachment, a man wearing the badge of a colonel, came up.

"I appeal to thee, in the name of God and humanity," cried the woman, addressing him with outspread palms, "interpose against this shocking butchery. Is it needful murder be committed? And its subject a helpless, wounded man?"

"Put up that weapon," was the stern command given the trooper.

"You will fall back to the rear," was the further order, "and report to me at headquarters, to-morrow morning. Indeed, madam, there were no orders to slay, but to capture only. This man was acting without authority.

"And if not too great a liberty, madam, may I ask you for a glass, when this wounded soldier is served?"

He was cheerfully supplied with the glass, drank and passed on.

General Lacy, commanding the Americans, sur-

prised and driven from the Crooked Billet, was reinforced when a few miles beyond the Quaker's. Turning, therefore, on the pursuers, the tide changed, and the British fell back. In the revulsive movement, the officer of the day fell. His subalterns, however, were enabled to conceal the mishap, and carried the wounded officer into a thicket by the roadside. They lay there until all of Lacy's party had passed. Their purpose being, after nightfall, to remove their wounded officer within the British lines.

When night set in, the four men in attendance, having constructed a sort of litter out of boughs, started from their hiding place, bearing their burden. To pass, now and then, a traveler on the highway, they were obliged to hasten into some copse for concealment.

The wounded officer, having been the chief part of the afternoon without surgical aid, and filled in the meantime with apprehension lest he might undergo capture as prisoner of war, was in a truly sad condition. He endeavored to bear up under the agitation of mind to which he was thus subjected, as well as the pains his wounds occasioned. But the time came that further progress was arrested. The jolting caused by the bearers' footsteps became unbearable. With groans growing more and more audible, they feared it would be impossible to safely reach their point of destination.

Recognizing the dwelling of the Haley's, as they approached it, the wounded man formed his resolve.

"Halt!" was his word of command to the bearers. "Put me inside this gate. I can go no further."

"Now," said he, when taken down from their shoulders, "you will knock at this door, and then save yourselves. I am thankful for the aid you have given. I will reward you if I can."

As the men, having doffed their caps and bade him adieu, hurried away, Deborah Haley appeared at the door.

"Who knocks?" was her demand.

"Alas, madam," the officer made answer, "I am once more at your threshold. Can you relieve a wounded sufferer?—a man dying for want of care?"

"Is it the officer who was here this morning?"

"The same, madam. I am grieved to disturb you; and especially to seek an asylum under your roof. I am Colonel Gardiner."

"Thee need feel no embarrassment," returned the lady. "Though engaged in a questionable calling, at least so esteemed by our sect, yet we bar not our gates against thee. I will call my husband to help thee in."

This was done. A physician was speedily sent

for, and the wound dressed. The patient was attended with due care.

Word sped at once throughout the district that a British officer was laid up at the Haley's. General Lacy, on hearing of it, directed that he be moved, if possible, within the Union lines. This, on examination of the case, being considered inhuman in his condition, his parole was taken, to report to headquarters, as soon as able to leave the house.

The disabled officer's days of confinement were much relieved by the daily visits of Bon Madden and little Florence Craft. Their prattle was entertainment through many weary hours. He took a growing interest in the little visitors, and looked with joy every day for their coming.

It was near the close of his confinement within the mansion, that a conversation took place between the guest and his kind entertainers, which awakened great surprise in the minds of the latter. It was incidentally disclosed by the invalid that he came from Yorkshire, and indeed from the same parish as the Haley's.

"I knew your brother, John Cresson, very well, madam," he said in the course of remark. "His residence was next ours, and during my childhood I was accustomed to see him every day. But of latter years, being most of the time away on duty, have had but slight knowledge of him, until

- four years ago. And now, as I recollect, madam, let me say I was present at your marriage. It is singular I did not before call you up in memory. I am pleased to recognize you now. Your husband, I should not have been so likely to know, since he lived at a distance, and was seen by me but the one time."

"Thee remembers my sister, Julia, no doubt?"

"O, very well. Much better than yourself. For a time we attended the same school. Did she come with you to this country?"

"Yes. And is here now."

"I don't know of anything, madam, that would afford me more pleasure than to see her again. Your brother, John, was much displeased with her marriage, I now recollect. I was home on furlough when it took place."

"Our marriages were the source of some displeasure to him," remarked Mrs. Haley. "We can't in all ways suit the whims of others. He could not brook my marital connection with one of the proscribed society of Friends. We were severed from that day. A sad thing to occur between brother and sister. Our mutual friends sought a reconciliation, but in vain. We have had no intercourse since. Once, after coming out to the colonies, I wrote him a letter. My epistle was not answered."

"I well understand that," said Colonel Gardiner. "He was a stern man, always. Forgive me for saying it, madam, but a few years back he was accustomed to declare his kindred should never inherit a shilling of his estate. Indeed, it was well understood he had willed the whole of it to a man, not overly commendable in character, whom he had in his employ as steward for some years after you sailed for America. I presume this man had him under control, by flattery or other means. At least, it so appeared to me on shipboard."

"On *shipboard*, does thee say?"

"Aye, madam. We sailed in the same vessel, four years ago, for this country. I was coming over with my regiment. Your brother took offense at some measure of government, I think, and, having gathered up his fortunes, was coming to the American colonies to end his days. I saw him every day on the vessel, before his death."

"His death?"

"He died at sea, madam, when half way over."

"Indeed, my friend," said the lady, "this is the first intelligence we have had of it. Did the steward return to England?"

"That is more than I know, madam. He came on to New London. I saw Mr. Chaffin daily, on board the vessel."

"*Chaffin*? Who was Mr. Chaffin?"

"The steward that I spoke of, madam. Your brother's legatee. Mr. Pixley Chaffin."

"There were people of that name in Yorkshire. Will thee please describe the one spoken of?" demanded the lady.

"Florid complexion, madam. Yellow hair; a squint in the left eye. A short, thick-set man; limped somewhat. He had had a leg broken, as I understood, and being awkwardly set, a sort of limp was the result."

As the narrator looked away a moment, a sudden glance passed between the husband and wife.

This was the close of the conversation. Mr. and Mrs. Haley stepped out and took seats on their porch. They had a season of silence. Then the husband spoke.

"So—Deborah," was his utterance.

"Even so, Reuben. But what is it to thee and me?"

"Thee has lost a brother," said the husband, after a pause.

"Having had the same father and mother, thy remark has truth in it," returned the wife. "Let me hope my heart is filled with becoming sorrow. Some years are passed since that brother lost the association of two sisters. It may be questioned if there was then the least sorrow whatever. But

we are not to judge one another, as commanded by the sovereign Ruler of the world. I therefore judge not him."

"We are in accord, Deborah; and it's now a source of consolation, that we have never uttered that name in tones of disrespect. I marvel he could pass away with the load of bitterness in his heart."

"When the book of life is opened, we shall know all things," remarked the wife. "Put on thy hat, Reuben, and we will step over to our sister Julia's. She is ignorant of these strange events."

The pair walked to the house of Peter Craft; and, after greeting, calmly took their seats. Mr. Craft and wife were both at home. Deborah opened the conversation.

"Strange and impressive news, Julia," she began. "The common course of nature knows not exception. Our brother is no more."

"What!" ejaculated Peter, with a start.

"Compose thyself, and thee shall hear," said Deborah.

"Pardon me," returned Peter, with an effort to assume gravity.

"He died four years ago—"

"Is thee certain of it?" broke in Peter.

"Do wait, my dear," urged Mrs. Craft. "Don't interrupt."

"Excuse me. Go on, Deborah," said her husband.

"Four years ago, at sea. Our brother had embarked for this country in view of making it his home. But an overruling Providence decreed otherwise."

"There's but one thing to do," said Peter, "and that must be done speedily. Reuben, thee or I, or both of us, must take passage at once for Yorkshire. There's too much involved in the case. Too much, I repeat, to let slip through our fingers. Evidence, in form of affidavits, must be taken along, to show who the lawful heirs are. It won't do that Deborah and my wife—"

"Stop there, Peter," interposed Mrs. Haley; "if it is the estate of my deceased brother, John Cresson, reference is had to, thee will have nothing more than thy labor for thy pains."

"No labor; no labor, at all Deborah. But a pleasure; a pleasure to serve thee and Julia."

"If thee had heard me out, this last assertion could have been saved thee. My brother disposed of all by will."

"I want to know!" returned Craft. "But that don't prevent us going over to secure what he has left us."

"He has left us nothing," said Mrs. Haley. "It has all been given to another."

"Has it? I'd like to know the individual."

"Thee knows him well, Peter Craft. It is Pixley Chaffin."

"What!" cried Peter, springing up. "It can't be. Impossible! Such a will can't stand. *Our* Chaffin? This fellow down at the factory? Why, Deborah Haley, he's but a clown."

"What is that to thee or me, Peter?"

"A great deal. A great deal to us. Have we not been waiting years for John Cresson to die? And now he's dead, away slips all into the fob of a beetle-headed coxcomb like this! It's a great deal to us."

"Finish the discourse without *me*," said Mrs. Craft. "I can bear no more."

"Don't go, Julia—don't go," pleaded the husband. "I beg thee sit down again. I was moved a trifle, and don't deny it. This news comes on one like a flood. Why, this man is a clown."

"Had not my brother the perfect right to bestow his property on whomsoever he pleased?" demanded Mrs. Craft.

"Indeed, Julia, I doubt it," answered the husband. "It is not in reason, nor equity. Look at it once. How will it appear in the eyes of the world? All left to this fellow with his velvet jacket and big watch seal! A bundle of fuss and fustian—with his chariots and dog carts—and menservants and

maidservants—and crop-eared whelps and bulldogs—and—and—there now, Julia, *don't* go. I beseech thee, don't go. I've said my all. Keep thy seat. I am through with it. I wouldn't, for the world, let it move me again. You know, all of you, that we get worried at times. Who can help it? Let the property go, I say. Go to the dogs. Every shilling of it. Let the jackal take it. He will be sailing over us, I've no doubt, like a balloon. With his roast beef and mutton-chops—the squint-eyed—pot-bellied—”

“Deborah,” said Reuben, rising to his feet, “it is time for us to go. Julia, we must bid thee farewell. If this matter is to be further discussed, let it be in Peter's absence.”

The visitors at once left the house; leaving Mr. Craft with his hands between his knees, his face buried in them, seeking to hide the flush of bewildering vexation by which it was overspread.

Charles Pixley Chaffin, an Englishman by birth, alluded to in the foregoing conversation, was a man of consequence. He was possessor of a more than ordinary fortune. He was the owner of mills, a factory, several farms, large tracts of woodland; and besides had large sums of money placed at interest. He had constructed a dwelling with outbuildings superior in style to those of the surrounding country; and eclipsed his neighbors

in manner of living. A wife, a son, some ten or twelve years old, and a daughter of less number, constituted his family. He had been the confidential steward of John Cresson, in Yorkshire, and was, as heretofore mentioned, now possessed of his large estate as sole legatee. He was not an educated man; nor had he the advantage, in his native land, of association with the higher, or even medium ranks, of the English people. His business qualifications, that may be supposed to have recommended him to his late patron, were good. He was noted for sharpness in making his bargains; and his word, by those knowing him best, was received with caution. In his manner of domestic life, he affected the airs of transatlantic aristocracy. He was pompous in bearing, and somewhat outre in dress. The sensation such a character might be supposed to excite in a rural community, he produced. The humble and low-born looked on him with the awe and admiration his vanity sought to elicit.



CHAPTER V.

"The maid that loves, goes out to sea upon
A shatter'd plank, and puts her trust in
Miracles for safety."

It is sometimes the fashion with young ladies to keep journals, wherein to record passing events. Miss Clarke made no exception to the rule. And it is from her carefully and well-written journal we now quote. We regard it as fortunate the volume has been preserved and has fallen into our hands. Otherwise this history could not have been written.

[*Extracts from the journal of Miss Molly Clarke.*]

Once more at Antioch! Dear, lovely old place! It warms my heart, and, it seems to me, quickens its pulsations. *Here* again, after nine years absence. Who could have supposed, when I left to attend the bedside of a sick mother, I should be detained so long? Going back to the native land for a short tarry, the same has been prolonged through the lapse of *nine* years.

But here I am at last, and find cordial welcome beneath the widow's roof. And rejoiced am I, the overruling Hand has spared her to ripened and contented age, and given comfort to her lot. And what a change in the old, familiar neighborhood! War, with its train of calamities, has given place to the calm of peace.

Nearing the abode of Mother Madden, I encountered a spruce young fellow, with a surveyor's compass under his arm and tripod on his shoulder, whom I did not at first recognize. He walked before me some distance; I, in the meantime, regarding with admiration his elasticity of step and grace of carriage. As he paused a moment to readjust his burden, I overtook him. I shall never forget the glow on his countenance, as turning round, he beheld me. The tripod dropped from his shoulder, and he rushed forward.

"Miss Clarke! Miss Clarke!" he exclaimed, trembling with fervor.

"It can't be!" I said on my part, taking the extended hand. "Who is it? Surely not Bon Madden?"

"But it is, Miss Clarke. And I was never so glad in all my life. You can't tell how much I rejoice. I've thought of you, and dreamed of you all these years. I don't think, now that you are back, we shall let you go away again."

"No, Bon, I don't want to go away again. I like this place better than any other, and hope to remain here for good and all."

"You can't imagine how you've been missed," said the other; "all the people have been asking after you."

"Well. Don't let me detain you. I see you

are on business. I won't keep you from your work."

"Don't fear, Miss Clarke. I was only going to do a short job of surveying; run out the lines of a farmer's purchase. I can do it just as well to-morrow. As you seem to be going in the direction of Antioch, I will attend you."

"All well there, I presume?"

"Yes."

"Of course, you live there still?"

"Still at Antioch. I couldn't feel at home anywhere else. And Mother Madden couldn't spare me."

"And now, Bon, as we pursue our way, let me be posted a little in local history. And first about yourself. These implements I see in your hands? Do *you* use them?"

"O, yes. Surveying is a thing easily learned."

"And who taught you the art?"

"Well, Miss Clarke, Mr. Madden's books. You know, perhaps, he was a surveyor. I came across his instruments and books some years ago. They were in a chest, stowed away in the loft. After looking over the books of instruction, tables, diagrams, &c., I found it a branch of learning I could acquire without an instructor. So I became a surveyor."

"And the people hereabouts employ you?"

"I am pleased to say, they do. I am kept very busy indeed. Mr. Chaffin has a great deal for me to do. And he pays liberally for the services I render him."

"This is all very acceptable news to me. Bon, I can assure you, I learn all this with true pleasure. Now let me hear about the Haley's."

"All well. They live at the same place. Mrs. Haley is our public Friend, you know. I go to hear her every Sabbath. She is a staunch friend of mine. So is her husband. I am indebted to both for many acts of kindness. They have encouraged me to go forward in the race of life."

"And the Craft family? How about them?"

"Just as usual. I don't know of much change. Mrs. Craft is the same kind-hearted, timid, timorous sort of person; never asserting her prerogative in the household, or having her way in anything, I believe. And her husband—well, you know him?"

"Yes; I know Mr. Craft. That is, Bon, if he continues to be the same. You don't speak of Florence. I thought it probable you would speak of her first."

"She is still at home."

"And well?"

"Very well."

From these brief replies, I began to fear some

difficulty had sprung up between the two; indissolubly connected as they had been in childhood days. I therefore avoided further inquiry as to the young lady, and asked after the Chaffin's.

"They are prosperous as ever. Mr. Chaffin has been a good friend and supporter of mine, as I just told you. Mrs. Chaffin and her daughter, I don't know much about. Augustus, the son, I see frequently. He is about my age; better looking than his father, and leads rather an idle sort of life. He seems to think there is no need of exertion on his part, being sufficiently provided for already. He and I are not friends just now."

"What is the matter?" I asked.

"That is a secret, Miss Clarke. I've mentioned it to but one."

"Then we will let the subject rest," I remarked.

[That part of the journal, descriptive of Miss Clarke's arrival at Antioch, and the night spent there, we pass over. We resume her account of incidents transpiring the following day.]

After a late breakfast next morning, (for we had talked half the night,) I started to go down to the Haley's. Before getting there, I fell in with Corporal Girty. He was in his shirt sleeves, felling a tree. I think a man was never more delighted. He threw down the axe, sprang over the log at a bound, and for a moment I was apprehensive lest

he might catch me up in his arms. His handshake was impressive. Certainly my own ached for some time after.

"Now, there's but one thing to do, Molly Clarke. Yonder is my house. Come with me without a word. I never felt more like talking since I came into the world. Come; we'll go and have it out, where we can dodge this sunshine."

"Now, sit down, madam, and make yourself comfortable," he continued after our entrance of the domicile. "It was never before this castle was honored with so distinguished a visitor. It is a pity the quarters are so indifferent."

"I have felt at home in those much worse. Don't disparage the roof that has sheltered you so long, Mr. Girty."

"That remark does me good," was the return. "I shall think the better of my cabin forever."

After a while I led the conversation to another point. I had the withdrawal of Florence Craft from her usual visitations at the widow's in mind; a circumstance I had incidentally learned the night before, and was desirous of further particulars.

"My friend," I began, "there's a host of people I am desirous of inquiring after; having had them in mind for many years. They have not been absent from thought at any day during that period. And so of the incidents occurring here during my

stay abroad. It may seem a little strange, but no occurrence has taken stronger hold on me than that boys' foot race."

"Just so. It was a grand affair."

"And the hurrahs it evoked," I added.

"I remember. A good portion from the top of the fence."

"Yes, Corporal Girty; a good portion. I was never more in earnest in my life. And all the hope of my soul was, that our little boy with the naked arm should win. What a grand little courser he was."

"Good grooming—good grooming, Miss Clarke. I take to myself the credit of preparing that nag for the turf."

"And the scene at the close! Do you mind when little Florence had her arm around his neck?"

"Ah! don't I? Between you and me, I'd like to see it there again—and forever. But that can't be, I fear."

"What? How is that?"

"Struck by the undertow, Miss Clarke. It makes me mad every time I think of it. Year after year that little couple were like born twins. They played together—ate together—went hand in hand up and down the path at Antioch—sat on the same bench at school, and were the light of

each others life. It was a glorious thing to look at. It must have been pure love. But, as I said, the confounded undertow."

"How do you mean, Corporal?"

"The whole matter gone to shipwreck. At an end."

"Will you please explain how that was?"

"The girl's father, Miss Clarke. The girl's father. That miserable old Craft. He it was broke the neck of the affair."

"Yes?"

"Well. The Chaffin's. You recollect the Chaffin's?"

"Very well, Corporal. What of them?"

"Just this. That young Chaffin, chip of the old block, full of plots and deviltry, got his slushy eye on Florence. It was an easy thing for the young villain to win over Peter Craft. Why, he could twist Peter into a knot in ten minutes time. He made the simple curmudgeon believe he would secure him the post of general superintendent of all his father's affairs; and at an enormous salary. Pixley Chaffin wanted such a man to relieve him somewhat from care. His son was not fit for it; nor in truth for anything else. So the son began operations on Craft. He professed great admiration of Craft's daughter, hinting meanwhile, that he was in search of a wife. The two worms on

the hook, (the office and the son-in-law,) were enough. The old mullet bit at first cast, and the young Briton had him. Yes, had him fast by the gills. This was some months ago, and the young lady has not set foot on the doorstep at Antioch since."

"And does Bon go to Craft's?"

"No, indeed. That game is played out. He had orders to keep off the premises. It's a hard case, Miss Clarke, and has kept me in a perpetual sweat ever since."

"Let me ask what the elder Chaffin thinks about it."

"He ? why he's puzzled. It was, after all, a sort of damper on Pixley. You may think strange of it, but this boy at Antioch was his pet. In fact, he counseled with Bon as he would with a grown-up man. Had him do all his surveying. And if a tangle took place in the mixed up accounts of his different branches of business, that nobody else could unravel, Bon Madden was sent for straight. Somehow the lad has a head for figures; and a muddled mess of book entries that nobody else can get hold of, either by the head or tail, is perfectly easy for Bon. Such was Chaffin's estimate of him, that it became known a short time ago he intended bestowing on the youth the superintendency of his business transactions."

"And has been made to change his mind, you think?"

"Be sure. Even John Bull must give way to his son. It was, I dare say, like having a tooth pulled, but he had to give in."

"I have great regard for Florence Craft, and if this matter must result as it seems likely to, I hope he will make her a happy wife."

"Why, yes," said the Corporal. *If* all these things come about. Everybody likes Florence. *If*, as you say, he can chase down the game he is after, I hope she will be a happy wife."

"From all I gather, there don't seem much probability of her ever marrying her lover. It seems all intercourse is ended."

"Allow me a word or two in strict confidence, Miss Clarke. I know I can confide in you. I'll trust you, any way. You know Bon is my boy," he added with a wink. "All the child I have, in fact. So he and I make one."

"Well, he came to me with his trouble. He didn't want to harrass Mother Madden; so he came to me. And he put the entire rigmarole before me from beginning to end. He didn't want to do anything unfair or dishonorable. He would do as I said."

"And may I ask how you advised him?"

"I took three days to reflect upon it. I looked

the matter through, fore and aft. At the end of that period I was ready with my report."

"Well?"

"I told him to stand his ground, and receive the enemy's fire, front to front. If the girl loved him, and he loved her, I'd hang on till the last horn blew. He had his rights, I told him, and I believed he had the pluck to fight for them. How does it strike you, Miss Clarke?"

"I take no exception."

"Good. Well, in consequence, there's been some manœuvring on the sly, as might be expected."

"Meetings, I suppose?"

"A good many. The young Briton will do well if he can beat us both. I've gone in, Miss Clarke, horse and foot. Bon is all I have in this world. And a man with an only child will fight for him as long as he can toe the mark. Don't you see?"

"I comprehend, Corporal."

"Now, I hope you will be about here for some time, (always, in fact,) and put in an oar for our boy."

Corporal Girty walked with me a good part of the way to Haley's. Having spent some hours with the kind host and lady, I next went to Craft's. He and his wife were absent for the day; and I therefore had opportunity for a long talk with

Florence alone. We even went over, in part, the theme of such absorbing interest to her. With tearful eyes, she recounted to me some scenes with her father, whose harsh manner seemed to have made deep wounds in her sensitive nature. The infliction of this cruelty, as she regarded it, added to the severance from the object of her affection, made a heavy burden to bear.

"Indeed, Miss Clarke, I am the most wretched person in the world," she said. "It seems, sometimes, as if I should lose my mind. It has fallen upon me with a crushing force; and nearly taken from me the gifts of appetite and sleep. Can you do anything to relieve me of this wretchedness? I feel a kind of freedom in making an appeal to you, and asking what I ought to do under the circumstances. I think you have a feeling for me in my trouble, and I do ask, what shall I do? O, Miss Clarke, what *shall* I do?" and she burst into a fit of weeping.

I had not expected this question, and it embarrassed me. I remained silent.

"You used to care for me," she began again, wiping away the tears. "I thought you loved me. Have you no feeling for me left?"

"A vast deal, my dear Florence. All that I ever had. And this affliction adds to its compass."

"Then why don't you answer me?"

How could I? I could only look in the tearful eyes, with a sudden gush from my own. She saw it, and threw her arms about my neck. The briny flood ran down upon my shoulder; and I could distinctly hear the throbbing of her heart.

"Now, try to be calm," I pleaded, when the arms relaxed and she sat down beside me.

"O! Miss Clarke! Miss Clarke!" she began again, "I almost wish I could die. I don't want to live any longer. All my dream is gone. A heavenly dream it was! It's all over. Why don't you speak? I ask a question, and you don't answer."

"How can I, my love?" I replied at last. "Is it for *me* to counsel? Your parents are the proper ones."

"Yes, I know—I know. I *do* talk with mother, but with what avail? She only weeps. Her hands are tied."

"Florence, have you seen Bon lately?"

"Yes."

"And are you to see him again?"

"Once. Once more. But one time more, Miss Clarke. I didn't intend even that, but he begged so hard for one more interview."

"May I ask you when that is to be?"

"To-night, Miss Clarke. To-night, in the grove back of our wagon shed. And it rains; and looks

as though it might continue through the night. He may take cold if he comes out, I fear. Yes, this is to be the last. Do you think it wrong?"

"Being the last, as you say, I don't think it wrong."

"I am glad you say so. Very glad. I've nobody to talk to about my difficulties, excepting mother; and, as I told you, she is hampered.

"Why, here she comes now! And well soaked with the rain, I've no doubt. Do entertain her when she comes in, until I can dry my eyes."

The lovers' tryst was consummated an hour after the foregoing conversation. The rain did not prevent the meeting. But very short was the interview. Only a few words had passed, when they separated in haste.

The day following, the community was electrified with the intelligence that Bon Madden had been arrested for robbery, and committed to the county jail.

[*We lay aside Miss Clarke's journal for the present.*]



CHAPTER VI.

"The laws have cast me off from every claim,
Of house and kindred, and within my veins
Turn'd noble blood to baseness and reproach."

But two weeks intervened betwixt the commitment of Bon Madden and the time appointed for the sitting of the Court of Sessions. Owing to the sickness of the Judge who presided in the district, Judge Nesbitt, from another county, was called to hold the session of Court.

As might be supposed, the community in which the accused resided, took sides at once at the inception of the case. The matter was theme of excited discussion at every hearth, by both sexes and of all ages. Corporal Girty had never known before how large was the number of admirers his boy had. But the sentiment in his favor lacked a trifle of complete unanimity. Peter Craft, Augustus Chaffin, and possibly one or two more, were on the other side.

It came to be known, greatly to the grief of the Haley's and his own family, that Craft was prosecutor in the case. It was on his affirmation the warrant of arrest had been issued. The reasons actuating young Chaffin were easily comprehended. No persuasions, (and many were made,) could induce the two men to forego the prosecution.

Mother Madden was, as matter of course, the object of general commiseration. The Haley's, together with the entire community of Friends, waited upon her with assurances of sympathy. Even Pixley Chaffin, who, in his intercourse with her boy on business affairs, had been a frequent caller at her dwelling, now paid his respects to the forlorn widow.

Florence Craft was overwhelmed. She passed several days in bed. She had, as it now appeared to her, in the last scene of the drama, played a most humiliating part. She had slipped out at one door of the wagon shed as her parent entered the other. Haste, an indiscreet haste, might find excuse in a panic, but it was annoying to think of it. Was there guilt in the act that she was afraid to face her parent? But the event was past, and no mortification of heart could correct it. She could only find relief in visiting her load of vexation on Miss Clarke's attentive ear, who waited at her bedside.

The day of trial came. A crowd, that nearly depopulated the district by its withdrawal, set out for the county seat. The case had assumed unlooked-for importance. When the doors of the Court house were opened, a throng rushed in. Every part of the room was crowded to excess. The Judge took his seat, and the Court was opened. When some preliminary matters were

disposed of, the case of Bon Madden was ordered on for trial. The prisoner was sent for. It was not long until he came, in charge of an officer. All eyes were turned on the stripling. Many gave him nods of recognition while edging his passage through the throng. The Judge looked down with an aspect of surprise upon this comely youth, with his marked features of face and manly bearing. It was not the usual mould and pattern of the thief and malefactor. Here was more of the refined lineaments of the scholar and gentleman than common to the criminal dock.

The indictment was read. It charged the prisoner with stealing thirty Spanish silver dollars, two bank notes of the value of ten dollars each, and one purse of the value of fifty cents, the goods and property of Peter Craft. To this, in clear tones of voice, the accused pleaded *not guilty*. A jury were empaneled, and Mr. Craft was called to the witness stand. He came forward with an air of alacrity, and something of a smirk at the corners of his mouth. His story was listened to in dead silence. It was in substance as follows:

On the day named in the bill of indictment, he and his wife had been to the next village on business. He had there collected, of a man who owed him, fifty dollars. Twenty of it was in two ten-dollar bank bills; and thirty in Spanish silver dollars. He put both the bills and the silver coin

in the pocket of his overcoat, in his purse. Their business finished, he and his wife got in their wagon and drove home. It was near sunset when they got there. It was raining. When he was engaged in putting away his team and wagon, he had taken off his overcoat, that had the purse and money in it, and hung it on a nail near the back door of the wagon shed. When he afterwards went into his house he forgot to take the coat with him.

Some time after supper, having been engaged in conversation with Miss Clarke, then at his house, his mind recurred to his coat being left at the shed, and he went out after it. Coming to the front of the shed, he heard a sort of commotion inside, and on stepping in, saw the prisoner, as he thought it to be, passing in a hurried way from the shed. He was then just by the door where the coat had been hung up.

The coat, however, was not now on the nail, but lying on the ground, just outside of the door. He picked up the garment, but to his astonishment, found the purse and money had been abstracted. The money, excepting one of the bank notes, he had not seen since. He was about to state something that had been told him by Mr. Slack, a merchant living near him, but was informed by the Court it was not evidence.

Augustus Chaffin next testified. He had called

at Mr. Craft's on business the morning after the alleged theft, and was asked by Mr. Craft to go with him out to his wagon shed. When he got there, he was shown some tracks at the door, made by the human foot. It had rained the night before; the tracks were plainly visible in the mud, and were fresh. At Mr. Craft's request, he and that gentleman followed them. They led directly to the house of Mrs. Madden, on the hill. They followed the tracks to within a few rods of her door. He should judge the tracks were made by an individual of the size of the prisoner at the bar.

Mr. Slack, the merchant referred to, was qualified. On the morning in question, the defendant had called at his store, about nine o'clock, to pay him a bill he owed. Amongst the money in his hands, and which he passed to him in payment, was a ten-dollar bank note. He exhibited the same note to Mr. Craft and Augustus Chaffin that forenoon. He had the bill then with him in Court, and by direction of counsel, for purposes of trial, he laid the bill on the trial table. It was shown to the jury.

Mr. Craft was then re-called; the note put in his hands, and he was desired to say whether he had ever seen it before. Without hesitation he said he had. It was one of the bills he had left in his overcoat. He saw it the morning after at Mr.

Slack's, and there identified it. He pointed to a sort of blot or discoloration, very visible on one corner of the note, by which he was enabled to remember it. He knew it to be his property. The purse and remaining money he had not seen since they were taken from his shed.

Here the Commonwealth rested its case. And at this point a commotion took place in the rear part of the room. A woman, it was said, in the confusion had a fit. The Court directed the officers in attendance to look after the matter, and take the woman out into the fresh air.

The counsel of the prisoner, in opening his case, had very little to say. He was debarred the usual latitude of stating in detail the facts he should lay before the jury. Alas! there was but the *one* fact. Bon Madden could produce evidence of his good character for honesty. Upon this, and this only, he should be obliged to rest his case.

The witnesses produced to this point were numerous. The Haley's, and many of the society of Friends were called, and testified in strongest terms in favor of the unblemished character of the accused. Even Pixley Chaffin gave his testimony in his favor. Many ladies, including Miss Clarke, were forcible and eloquent in utterance of their encomiums. The last called, Corporal Girty, was emphatic. He brought down his clenched fist on

the railing of the witness stand, affirming that he knew this boy like a book. That he was loaded and overloaded with honesty—full of it to the very brim.

The Judge, stern minister of justice, could do naught more than discharge his duty. He was pleased to state, that the character established by the prisoner was one of which any man might entertain pride in possessing. He had never known one to excel it from the mouths of witnesses.

But, he was compelled to say to the Jury, it was in cases where the testimony in whole was different from that on trial, that proof of good character could avail. When the evidence was reasonably full to a party's guilt, something more than mere character must be adduced. A man, for instance, after perpetration of his first crime, may set up and establish by proof, an unimpeachable character. Such, for reasons of policy in the administration of justice, through a long course of years, had been the law.

The jury, with sober faces, retired. It was not long before they filed into Court. Their verdict was no matter of surprise. It was truly conjectured before returned. It was a verdict of *guilty*. But it contained a recommendation for mercy.

The Judge sat a moment in silence. His honor

was impressed with an overshadowing emotion. With a sort of sigh, he asked the attorney of the Commonwealth if he had any motion to make. Nothing, was the response, but to move for sentence.

"Bon Madden," said the Judge, "please step before the Court. You have been convicted by the jury of a crime, punishable in all lands. It is our duty to impose sentence. Before doing so, I have to ask if you have anything to say in your own behalf."

"Anything I might say would, I suppose, be in vain," returned the lad. "The jury has condemned me. I don't blame them. I don't blame you, sir. I submit to my doom. I shall receive my sentence, and bear up under it as well as I can. I don't feel, in my own conscience, that any stain is upon me. The world will despise me, I know, but God will not cast me off. He knows more than man, and knows how to judge my case. The worst of the affliction will fall on the good woman who has sheltered me so long. And on the kind-hearted man who has been a father to me for years."

Here Corporal Girty covered his face with his hands, and sobbed aloud. Tears were falling from the eyes of scores of persons. The Judge applied his handkerchief to his own.

"Go on," he said after a few minutes.

"I don't know that I have more to add," returned Bon. "I am thankful you have indulged me thus far. I am in your hands."

"If you are willing, perfectly willing," began Judge Nesbitt, "I would like to ask you a few questions. I am in a state of doubt. Somehow, I am persuaded there is a mistake in this proceeding. But, as I said, it would afford me gratification to have answers from you to a few inquiries."

"I will answer as far as I can," said Bon.

"Understand me. You are not obliged to answer."

"I will hear the questions, Judge."

"Is it true those were your tracks, spoken of by the witnesses, leading from the wagon shed to Mrs. Madden's?"

"I have every reason to believe they were."

"Then you were at the shed that night?"

"It is true. I was."

"Did you have knowledge of Mr. Craft's coat, if it was there?"

"I think so."

"What knowledge?"

"As I passed out, I brushed against something near the door, that fell under my feet. It may have been a coat."

"Now, let me inquire if you had any lawful business in that shed on the night in question?"

"I thought I had, sir."

"You needn't answer this unless you choose; but are you free to state what that business was?"

"I decline to answer that," returned Bon.

"Very well. I thank you for the candid responses you have made. And now, in passing sentence, I shall not be unmindful of the mercy recommended by the jury. Our sentence will be the very lowest limit known to the law. It is that you, Bon Madden, pay a fine of one dollar, and costs of prosecution. That you restore the property stolen, if not already restored, or pay the value thereof to the owner. And that you undergo imprisonment in the county jail for the period of ten days. And you are now committed to the Sheriff's custody."

Judge Nesbitt sat with a gleam of satisfaction on his face, to witness the scene that ensued. As Bon turned away, Mother Madden, who had occupied a seat beside the counsel, arose to meet him. She opened her arms, and the boy fell weeping into their embrace. Miss Clarke, the Haley's, Corporal Girty, and many others, gathered round them. Bon's hand, when released from Mother Madden's arms, was sought by scores of admirers as he passed through the throng. The jurors, by whom he was condemned, sought to palliate the duty under which they had been placed. Pixley

Chaffin offered him his hand with the rest, and made avowal of his regret. Never was a convict made the subject of more acclaim.

The whole assemblage escorted Bon to the doors of the prison. Another, sort of farewell hand-shaking, there took place.

"Good-bye, my boy," said Girty. "Go in with the Sheriff. He'll take good care of you. Don't try to break jail. You shall have plenty of company and plenty of grub. I'll be on hand at every sunrising. Keep up your spirits. Good-bye."

"Aye, me laddie," said Colin McCallom, a Scotch Presbyterian, clapping him on the shoulder, "we'll a' be looking after ye. Dinna fear. You're a braw chiel, in my ee. Time may come when the crooked things shall be made straight; and the rough ones a' smooth. Bide a wee in the prasen, laddie. Ye ha' unco freends o' the outside. The Laird preserve ye."

When half way home, Corporal Girty, who had Mother Madden and Miss Clarke in his wagon, found a young lady, overcome with fatigue and the heat of the day, sitting by' the roadside. It was poor Florence Craft. He helped the exhausted girl into his conveyance. As they passed on her exploit of the day was revealed. Afoot and alone, she had made her way to the trial. Her mother knew it, but not the husband. She had

crept into a sort of recess in the hall of justice to avoid detection, and she it was who had fainted on hearing the dreadful story detailed.

Augustus Chaffin, on the way home, mentioned the name of his fellow-witness to his father, regarding the post of superintendent. With abrupt terms, the parent directed the other to say not a word on the subject.



CHAPTER VII.

"There's mischief in this man."

Day by day after the trial, public opinion had growth in Bon's favor. As sympathy, founded on confirmed belief in an unjust verdict, increased towards the condemned boy, reprobation pursued the two witnesses who had appeared against him. Even Pixley Chaffin, of his own accord, or in yielding to the force of common sentiment, had turned his back on Craft at the Court house door.

It came to be understood that Deborah Haley would, on the succeeding Sunday, make the trial a theme of remark. The Friends' meeting house was therefore, on that day, packed with a throng of anxious listeners. The Chaffin's, though usually attending another place of worship, made it a point to be present. Mrs. Haley did not disappoint expectation. She dwelt on the sad occurrence long and well. The poor widow of Antioch, also having place in the speaker's gallery, was the centre of much observation. Her agitation caused the deepest commiseration on the part of all beholders.

Just before the meeting closed, a confused turmoil arose outside the edifice. It consisted in part of the cracks of a whip, the tramp of horses, and rattling of wheels. As the large congregation hastened out, anxious to know the cause

of the uproar, they were not kept long in suspense. A strange man, seated in a carriage, was driving around the church, and through the adjoining grounds at fearful speed. The carriage was discovered to be that of Mr. Chaffin.

A more singular looking person than the driver it would be difficult to describe. He appeared to be of middle age; corpulent, and short of stature; without any covering on a large, bald head; nothing about his thick neck; very curious eyes, that both turned inwards; a large mouth, with full set of teeth, rendered the more conspicuous by his hare-lip, and a sharply turned-up nose. His dress was coarse and ill-fitting. And added to all, his face gave evidence of a former visitation of smallpox.

As he wheeled up in front of the wondering throng at the meeting house door, with sudden jerk of the reins, he brought the horses down to a sudden halt. Exhausting his lungs with a loud whew, he turned his gaze on the silent crowd, with a broad grin on his features. Then, in the wheezing notes of a man with the quinsy, and uncouth gestures, broke forth in a stanza from a well-known whimsical ballad:

It grew and it grew to the church steeple top,
It could not grow any higher,
And there it form'd a true lover's knot,
For all true lovers to admire—ire—ire—
For all true lovers to admire.

He finished the song with a ludicrous obeisance. Inspecting the assemblage a moment, he perceived Mr. Chaffin, with his wife and children at his side, whom he hailed with a shout, a grimace and wink of the eye.

"Top o' the day to you, Chawles, my son of wax," he called out in a loud voice. "'Op in, my lad, 'op in. We're the boys that fear no noise. 'Op in, lad. Free passage, you know; our team, Chawles. Come aboard."

Chaffin made no reply. With confusion of face, on which perspiration was bursting forth, he whispered his wife to walk home with their son and daughter, and leaped into the carriage.

"Your 'and once more, darling," cried the stranger; "give us a grip of your 'and. Jolly old buck, you are," and he gave him a clap on the shoulder.

Chaffin seized hold of the lines and gave word to the team to move on. The stranger prevented it.

"'Old on, Chawles—'old on. Wait for the lady, my bonny boy. Wait for the mistress. Come, my lady, gay," he called to Mrs. Chaffin; "don't 'esitate, my dear. 'Op in."

Mrs. Chaffin, accompanied with her son and daughter, fled in consternation. Her husband drove away with all expedition, his companion

meanwhile waving his hand to the astonished assemblage in parting salute.

"It seems to me," said Chaffin, when at some distance on the way, and in deprecativè tones, "you might have spared me this stigma. If you're not lost to all sense of decency and manhood, I can't account for it."

"'Ow you talk, Chawles! 'Ow you talk! What can be your meaning? Pray, explain, my merry youth. Explain."

"What need? You're not a fool. Was it necessary, if you *must* come, it should be in drunken debauch?"

"Easy, my best of friends; easy," returned the other. "You wound me in a very tender spot. Don't pile on the hagony."

"Can you deny you're not drunk, this minute?"

"O, Willie brewed a peck o' malt,
And Rob and Allen cam' to see—"

the other commenced singing in a stentorian voice.

"In heaven's name, stop this racket," pleaded Chaffin. "It's an outrage on public decorum."

"Just to finish the verse, my dear friend?"

"I beg you to stop; if I must beg," returned Chaffin.

"Anything in the world to please you, Chawles. It seems a bit strange, my lad, you 'aven't a full

measure of affection for your most obedient, humble servant."

"You've falsified your word of honor," said Chaffin. "I trusted you, and you've gone back on me. You engaged to go South and remain there. You had the means put in your hands. Now, here you are in breach of the compact."

"Alligators, Chawles. Alligators. Deliver me from alligators. The most 'orrid of hall beasts of prey, Chawles. Is this the way to our 'ouse, my friend?"

"A nice hotel is just ahead," said Chaffin in alarm. "I am crowded for room just now at home, and thought you would prefer a good hotel for your quarters."

"An 'otel? Not a bit of it, my boy. I won't be put off with any 'otel accommodations. We 'ave quarters of our own, Chawles. Our own 'ouse. Drive me there, my boy. May I hinqire which direction it his from 'ere?"

"Back there," answered the other, pointing behind him, with an aspect of dismay on his features.

"And you've been driving me the wrong direction, eh?"

"I can take you there, if you'll only be quiet. Why do you come in a dress like this? It's a disgrace. Where's all your money gone to?"

"Chawles, as the man says in the play, 'thereby

'angs a tale.' I've been robbed—robbed in cold blood. Cards, you know? An innocent little game I 'ad with a true gentleman I met on the plains; and would you believe me, Chawles, he 'umbugged me hout of hevery shilling. He did, my good fellow, or my name's not Vanskiver."

"You tell me it's all gone?"

"To a copper penny, Chawles. I wouldn't misrepresent the solemn fact for the world. You know I never 'ad the vice of deceit about me. Hi therefore fall back on the partnership fund."

Chaffin made no further return than an audible groan. He turned his head away from his persecutor with disgust.

"And 'ow's business now, my friend?"

"I had rather not be questioned," replied Chaffin.

"O, aye. Hi understand. Hit's the Sabbath. Wrong, of course, to be mixing hup worldly haffairs with our devotions. Pardon me for making the blunder."

Mr. Chaffin arrived with his troublesome passenger at his house. The latter insisted on being helped from the carriage. The other was obliged to tender him his hand. When upon the ground the passenger, without ceremony, took Chaffin's arm, and was escorted within doors.

Dinner was awaiting the arrival of the host. He ushered his unwelcome guest, preparatory to

his coming to the table, into a side apartment, that he might wash himself. He told Vanskiver to wait there a moment and he would send the housemaid with a ewer of water and wash basin.

"Pa!" exclaimed Miss Chaffin, as her father came out of the room, "what on earth do you mean? Are we to have that abominable beast at our table?"

"Hush! my dear. Hush! He may overhear you."

"And what if he does?" returned the daughter. "He will be the death of us all. Ma has gone to bed already. That our house should be opened to a monster like this! Who in the name of wonder is he? Did you ever see him before?"

Chaffin had no time to answer, for a commotion was on foot in the wash room. He and his daughter rushed in. There was an exciting spectacle. The amazed housemaid was being whirled round the apartment, pitcher in hand, and the water flying in all directions. She was in Vanskiver's arms, twirling in a waltz, the air to which he was singing in a wheezing voice. Round and round the apartment they wheeled. The ewer at length fell from the grasp of the dizzy maiden, and was dashed in pieces; a scream from the daughter of Chaffin ensued. Just then the son entered at another door, and seizing the iron

poker at the hearth, was about to assail the riotous stranger, when Chaffin interposed. The waltz came to an end. The young people were sent out, and Vanskiver, something blown, reeled into a chair. For some time he sat in the enjoyment of a giggle that shook his rotund belly.

Chaffin was unable to speak. He glowered upon the mass of deformity in silence and with a sort of horror. When the fit of laughter came to an end, Mr. Chaffin was requested to bring another pitcher of water. He at once complied.

Neither Mrs. Chaffin, nor son or daughter appeared at the dinner table. The two men sat down alone. Vanskiver eating like a starved hound, finding fault now and then with the cookery or quality of the dishes served. A few glasses of brandy were produced on his requisition. During the meal he was continually applying the term *ours* to the articles of furniture, and in speaking of Chaffin's business affairs. He even called on his host to produce his cash account, his bonds, mortgages, and title deeds. The other replied in humble manner that all his papers were kept at the counting room, some distance away. Mr. Vanskiver was sorry, as "hinspection of such matters halways gave 'im very great 'appiness."

When the tiresome repast was over, in passing through the parlor, the visitor's eye was attracted

to Mrs. Chaffin's damask divan; whereupon saying he would take a nap, he slouched down upon it at full length. In a few minutes his loud snoring reverberated throughout the whole mansion.

Pixley, glad of a minute's reprieve, retired to the chamber of his wife. Locking the door on his entrance, the two had a long and exciting conference. Sometimes the tramping of the male Chaffin could be heard overhead. A wailing of the wife was occasionally attendant on the discussions of the pair.

The supper hour arrived. The drowsy sleeper was called from his couch of repose; leaving it sadly soiled and disfigured. Again the two men sat down alone. Sleep had been beneficial to the animal spirits of Mr. Vanskiver. Before entering the supper room, he wheezed out a stanza or two of a Bacchanalian song; and gave a specimen of whistling through his nose; a very 'ard feat to perform, as he assured his friend. At supper he required a little more brandy, as a certain preventive against *'ikups*.

It was a late hour when the host persuaded his guest to go to bed. They had had a long conversation in low tones. A subject of remark was a certain paper. Its name was not mentioned, but its nature and contents were understood between them. Chaffin seemed to surmise that it was in the possession of the other. Vanskiver hooted

the idea. At one time, the bosom of the visitor being a trifle open, Chaffin saw the edge of a leather girdle, worn around the body. He eyed it with curious interest.

When Chaffin had finally escorted his visitor to his sleeping apartment, he bade him a half cheerful good-night and left. He went into the sitting room of the dwelling, sat down and communed a long time with his thoughts. A few times he paced the floor. He was doubtless ill at ease. He was revolving something in his mind requiring the best effort of thought and judgment.

It was past midnight when Vanskiver, then half awake, perceived his chamber door to open, and saw a man enter. Affecting sleep, he kept watch on his visitor's movements. The garments he had taken off and laid on a chair were examined by this individual first. Then a hand was slyly slipped beneath the bed covering, and rested on the leathern belt. With a quick movement the supposed sleeper seized upon the hand, drew it up to his mouth, and caught the little finger between his powerful jaws. In vain the other sought to wrench it away. Failing in this, the captive laid hold of Vanskiver's throat. He in turn grabbed for the neck of his adversary. His arms were shorter than those of the other, and the attempt failed. At length, when nearly choked to suffocation, he was compelled to relax the grip of

his teeth, and the assailant went out of the room. Not a word, during the fierce struggle, had been uttered by either.

The next morning, the stranger found his host with a bandage on his hand. A felon, he said it was, and Vanskiver, who professed some knowledge of surgery, went on to prescribe, with much concern for his friend, several certain remedies for that painful affection. Remedies he avouched for, and "'ad found amongst the hin'abitants of the southern hocean."

During the forenoon of that day, Mr. Chaffin contrived a means of having his troublesome guest entertained, whilst he was occupied at one of his back farms in looking after an old well. It had supplied, in other days, a tenant house. But the house had been pulled down, and the well therefore was not in present use. It was a deep well, and known to be filled with that noxious gas, fatal to life. A man had already lost his life in it, while down for the purpose of cleansing it of rubbish. For some years it had been covered over with a couple of flag stones, and the path used in passing and repassing led directly over it. Mr. Chaffin now removed the flags, and put some pieces of boards in their place, in a tilting position, which, being covered with dirt and leaves, made a cunningly devised trap.

After dinner, each with a gun on shoulder, the

two men set forth on a hunt for rabbits. Or, as Vanskiver called them, '*ares*. A short distance from the old well they separated. Chaffin was to make a detour, whilst the other followed the path, the better to intercept the game that his companion might start from cover.

Opposite the fatal pit Chaffin paused, concealed by the bushes that had been allowed to grow up in the abandoned field. He paused to listen. When a clattering sort of noise, made by the displaced boards, at last fell on his attentive ear, accompanied with a muffled shout, he wheeled and fled for his home. Quick was the pace he made. That space had never before been traversed by him with more expedition or under like tumult of thought.

His conduct that afternoon was singular. He was in perpetual motion. He asked questions without waiting for the answers. He went back and forth, to and from the same place of business without apparent cause or object.

At his house he was continually sitting down and getting up. He was taking off and putting on again his coat. A few persons calling on particular business were turned off.

At the supper table, while the restless man was trying to eat without an appetite, word was brought in by the cook. It was, that a man was

in the kitchen, fiercely upbraiding the servants, and swearing he would have some brandy.

"Who is he?" demanded Chaffin.

"That queer man who went hunting with you, sir."

"No!" exclaimed Chaffin, springing up. "Alive! And in the kitchen! I'm glad of it, on my soul!"

"Pa! pa!" screamed the daughter.

"I say I'm glad of it. Stop your noise."

"Why, pa; how *can* you say so? You ought to go out and set the dog on him."

"Let go, you simpleton," said he; don't I know what I'm about? In the kitchen, is he?"

Mr. Chaffin hurried away. He found his hunting companion, with half a dozen rabbits hung on his shoulder, the blood from which had streamed down over his clothing, making him a disgusting spectacle.

"Glad to see you again," said Chaffin extending his hand.

"Chawles," returned the other, "is it always your style to desert your friends when hout 'unting? I 'unted for you all the hafternoon?"

"Possible! I couldn't have been far off."

"I thought you 'ad slipped away. And that big mastiff of yours, Chawles. What do you suppose 'appened *'im*?"

"Can't say. Nothing, I trust. What was it?"

"Very sad affair. Very sad. Well, as the big brute runs before me along the path, Chawles, of a sudden he steps on a few boards, right before me, and down he goes like a shot. Yes, I'm stating the truth, my friend, he went out of sight before you could say Jack Robison. It must 'ave been a well. I looked in to see, and there he was, dead as a 'erring. Am I to die 'ere for want of a little brandy?" he continued, turning on a servant.

By order of the host, the liquor was forthcoming. When it was swallowed with some smacking of lips, the rabbit hunter was taken in to supper. The ladies had disappeared. The two men enjoyed the meal alone.

Afterward, a long conference ensued. It was a business session, and lasted a good part of the night.

"If it *must* be," said Chaffin, at the close of the interview, "hard and unjust as it is, you shall have it. It's the third of all I have in the world. If you had the proper sense of fairness, such a demand would never be made. I see my position, and must yield. Let it be the last. I humble myself so much as to pray and beseech you, that it may be the last. You have drained me heretofore, or I should not feel this so deeply."

The next morning there was a leave-taking.

Vanskiver, arrayed in the other's best suit, was mounted in a gig, to which was harnessed the best steed of the stable. He was in buoyant spirits, showing his teeth through the hare-lip, and casting on his attendant host a beaming smile. Before cracking the whip he was waving to and fro, he gave his parting words.

"Chawles—my dear Chawles," he said with mock solemnity, "let me leave with you a parting word of hadvice. That bed-room door, Chawles; if I should ever sleep there again, must 'ave a key. And that old well, Chawles, I hadvise you to fill hup, or some good friend of yours might fall hinto it. Good-bye, Chawles."



CHAPTER VIII.

"I do not love
Much ceremony; suits in love should not,
Like suits in law, be rock'd from term to term."

[Further extracts from the journal of Molly Clarke.]

A few days after the trial of Bon Madden, I was sitting out under Mother Madden's white oak. We had just finished our breakfast, and I had taken a book in hand, and gone under the great tree to read. Before long, I perceived Corporal Girty approaching. He had a long whip in his hand, of the kind used by teamsters. He had on his working dress; the completion of which was a tow-linen over-dress, enveloping the body down to the knees. A garment I perceive much in vogue, and of marked utility. The Corporal came on at a fast gate. When he reached the place where I sat, he took off his hat, wiped his brow, and then entered upon the discharge of business.

"I'm in a desperate hurry, Miss Clarke," he began. "You will excuse much ceremony. Let me state my case. I am building a new barn, and with my men and team was just starting after a load of logs. Well, news came out from the house that upset me. I made up my mind in a flash. I told the men to wait fifteen minutes, until I could run over to Mother Madden's and back. So I'm here, Miss Clarke, at your service."

"Well, Corporal?"

"I'll state what I'm after," he continued. "It won't take us five minutes, and I can then go after my logs. To tell the truth, there's a rumpus in my kitchen. Everything at loose ends. When I got this Walton girl, with the stiff knee, you know, I thought I mas made up. But bless you, a man was never more mistaken. She's not worth the porridge she eats. She wastes all that comes into the house. My cellar is an astonishment; and I have to make my own bed. I don't think she ever saw a bed until coming to me. Then she eats with her mouth open, making a slushing uproar that drives me distracted. And greasy! there's nothing that don't stick to her. Why, the truth is, she's like the linchpin of a cart. She smears everything she touches. Isn't it horrid?"

"Very—very horrid," I responded. "But go on."

"Well, as I said, being ready to start for the woods, out comes word that the slattern had somehow got her foot in the stone jar of pig's-foot souse, and was bawling for help. I had to go down in the cellar and break the jar to get her loose."

"I thought you had another woman, Corporal. What has become of her?"

"Yes, Miss Clarke. That was Theodosia Cat-

gut. Well, she was too high and mighty for common use. I bore up with her long as I could, but had to give in at last. When I fished this Walton girl's hair comb out of the cream, I thought the world was near its end. But the airs of Theodosia were, if anything, worse. What do you think of her milking in silk gloves, and wearing a smelling bottle round her neck? And delicate! she was delicate as a duchess. Fainted one morning over a dead pigeon. Couldn't eat a cherry without first taking off the skin. Yes, she came to that pass she couldn't look at me with the *naked* eye. I've somewhere read of such a case, but never before met with one. And this brings me to state my errand."

"Let me know what it is, if you please."

"I'm sorry to waste your time, but it's this: I made up my mind that team shouldn't start for the logs until I could see daylight ahead. I pulled that drab's foot out of the souse and made tracks for *you*. I said to myself, 'Corporal Girty, the article you need about your premises, is a wife.' I took the hint and pulled out at once. Yes, Miss Clarke, I was desperate, and decided in my own mind I'd marry somebody; anybody, in fact, sooner than find everything about me going to destruction endways. I'd put up with any one that fell in my way, sooner than endure it longer. So I am here."

"I don't exactly comprehend," I began.

"I know—I know," broke in the other. "All sudden, no doubt. But do me the justice to understand, I wouldn't have troubled you for the world, if there was any earthly way to save myself from ruin. I've had my day with duchesses and doxies, and must try another mode."

"Then, it's a wife you want?"

"The very thing. I wouldn't bother you, Miss Clarke, but you see I'm in a pinch. I've even stopped my men and team to attend to it. I had no doubt the matter could be brought to a head in a few minutes. Yes, what I want is a wife."

"And after all your untoward experience with women, Corporal Girty, would you venture to trust *me*?"

"Ah! wouldn't I? You Yankee girls know everything."

"True, I might keep my feet out of your jars, Corporal. But in the marriage state there are often jars of another kind. There is, besides, suitable for matrimony, a certain ingredient, called love."

"Love?"

"Yes. And most important it is."

"If that's all that stands in the way, the thing is settled."

"I don't comprehend it in that light, Corporal. Certainly you have never said you loved me."

"Said it? no. Of course not. What was the use? Don't everybody, (everybody but yourself,) know that to be the fact? I knew it all along."

"I am certainly very much pleased, as well as flattered, to learn this, Corporal Girty, but—"

"But what?"

"We should be assured of love on both sides. Then this contract, binding throughout the period of human life, may be safely entered into. You see this?"

"Plain as a pikestaff. If there's not love on both sides, it's not my fault, Miss Clarke. Am I keeping you too long from your book?"

"O, no. By no means. Don't be afraid of trespassing on my time. I have always time to bestow on one I so much regard. But this proposition, taking me somewhat by surprise—"

"I'll withdraw it with pleasure, if you say so."

"With *pleasure*?"

"*Pleasure*, did I say? By the life, no! I'll not withdraw it long as the sun shines. Molly, you must come and live with me. I'll be a good, kind husband. You can make me better than I am. Even now, I believe there's the making of a first-class man in me. You can smooth off the rough surface, and give me a polish. And no one can do it but Molly Clarke."

"Corporal Girty," I made answer, "you are but stating what I have long time known. It has been a nobleness of heart, evinced in all your acts, that for years has drawn me to your side, and given me pleasure in our association. You have been the friend of the widow and the orphan. More tongues than mine speak your praise. My regard for you, and admiration of your manly impulses, strengthen with every succeeding year. I cannot express the gratitude your kindly offer excites in my heart. I will take it into consideration, and give you my answer in a few days."

"God bless you, Molly," said he, turning away with choking utterance. "God bless you, *always*. I'll go and bring that load of logs."

[We lay aside the journal for the present.]



CHAPTER IX.

"We see but dimly through the mists and vapors;
Amid these earthly damps
What seem to us but sad, funeral tapers
May be Heaven's distant lamps."

Very few days passed during the incarceration of Bon Madden that Corporal Girty was not on hand with some delicacy to gratify his taste. He was there the morning before the expiration of the term of sentence, and arranged with Bon to come the following day at sunrise and convey him to his home.

He had not been gone an hour before a messenger came to the prison with an important document. It was the Governor's pardon. Accompanying it was a letter from Judge Nesbitt, directed to Mother Madden, which was to be handed to Bon, that he might convey it to the widow on his release. The letter we quote, in part:

"My Dear Madam :

"Impressed with the conviction on leaving the Court of your county, that your son was erroneously convicted, and this impression gaining strength day after day, I concluded at last to take action in the case. I therefore waited on the Executive of the Commonwealth, and procured a pardon. It has an important effect on the status of your son. I will state in brief in what manner.

"It makes a new man of the late convict. It exempts him from all corporeal penalties and forfeitures; and gives him a new credit and capacity amongst his fellow men.

"I am very happy, madam, to have been the instrument in obtaining this important document from the Governor, and truly gratified in conveying to you information of the fact. And I congratulate you on again having beneath your roof a young man whose demeanor and intelligence so much impressed me at the trial."

With this epistle in his pocket, Bon immediately set forth. He did not follow the usual road home. Near his journey's end, he sought a wood road, with which he was familiar, that led him away from contact with dwellings, and he hoped also with any of the inhabitants. He was disappointed as to the latter.

At a certain point on his route, a party of men were engaged in a vain effort to load a large log on their wagon.

"Hurrah! here's help," cried one of the men, acting as foreman. "Now we can put it on. Why, it's Bon Madden! Come, my boy, give us a lift."

"Certainly; with great pleasure," answered he, stepping to the log.

"Now, men; all together," said the man who had addressed him. "Why, Gus, what's the matter,

you step back?" addressing young Chaffin, who had withdrawn his aid as Bon tendered his.

"I don't lift with a thief," returned Augustus.

"Is that term applied to *me*?" demanded Bon.

"It is. You *are* a thief," was the answer.

"Gentlemen," said Bon addressing the employees, who were regarding young Chaffin with scowling glances, "I did not take this position of my own option. *You* requested me. And I'm glad you were willing to lift by my side. I wish to assure you, though condemned by a jury, that I am *not* a thief."

"Nobody, but two men, ever thought you were," said the foreman.

"Thank you," said the youth. "I know the two men you refer to. One of them is before me. I mean *you*, sir, Augustus Chaffin. And I demand of you the instant recall of that foul word, which you will refuse at your peril."

"I won't recall it. I repeat it," said the other defiantly, and placed himself in attitude of defense.

Bon did not strike a blow, but catching his adversary by the neck, threw him, by a sudden movement, flat on his back.

"Now, recall that word," putting his foot on the other's breast, "or I'll crush you with my heel."

"I do—I do recall it. And I beg your pardon," cried Augustus.

"That is enough. Give me your hand," continued the conqueror, helping him to arise, and brushing the dirt from his clothes.

"Shall we help load this log?" he asked of his late adversary."

"Yes," the young Chaffin returned, and both put to their shoulders.

"You have done us a great service, Mr. Madden," said the foreman, when the log was on, "and we're very much obliged."

"I am glad you were free to ask me," returned Bon; "and I bid you all good-morning."

During the period of Bon's imprisonment, Florence Craft had made several visits at Antioch. She was there this identical morning, knowing not of Bon's release, and on her return home down the familiar path, she met her friend of other days. They were close together, in an elbow of the wood-path, and with glances of surprise, both stopped. They stood a few moments in silence. It seemed a question as to who should speak first; or perhaps whether they should speak at all. Bon broke the embarrassing spell.

"May I come to you?" he asked in agitating tones.

Poor Florence was overwhelmed with emotion. Her lip trembled. A moment she gazed at the other. With an agony beyond her control, she

turned away her face. Venturing, after a few seconds, to look at him again, he was not before her. With a low murmur of agony, he had fled beneath the overshadowing boughs, and was lost to sight.

The girl, who had been clinging to a bush to stay herself during the brief interview, sank down in the path. The delusive dream, so often leading the way to anguish of heart, had beguiled another victim. It was some time before she arose and pursued her homeward journey.

The news of Bon's pardon circulated with rapid progress throughout the vicinity. The men, whom he had aided in loading the log, brought intelligence of his return. They related, with something of ecstasy, his triumph over the young Chaffin. Colin McCallom, the saddler, laid aside his implements of trade and issued forth. The peddler of good tidings, he went from house to house. He even ventured a call at the dwelling of Peter Craft.

"Hech! neebour Craft!" he called out. "Ye hae heard the braw news, na doot?"

"No. What news?"

"Ower guid—ower guid, my frien'. All the folk awa' yont, are fu' o' it. Guid news, indeed."

"Well. Out with it," said Craft, something impatient.

"Over glad I am to obleige ye. The chiel's aback ance mair. Aye, mon; he's e'en aboon the braes o' Antioch, this vera hour. The guid Governor, (may the Laird keep him,) granted the bonny lad fu' pardon—fu' pardon, sir. An' ye ken the meaning o' that? Let me spak o' it a wee. A pardon, mon, makes one new the whyles; aye, I maun say, makes him white as snaw. Na, doot ye spier—"

"I want nothing further of your jargon," broke in Craft, rushing out of the house.

"Weel, now, my guid leddy, the auld mon seems mickle sour. I wadna for a five-pund note do him wrang."

The remark was made to Mrs. Craft. Miss Clarke and Florence were sitting by. The lady of the house made the best excuse for the husband she was able to, and persuaded Colin to sit down. Being full of his theme, he did so, and entertained them an hour, with enconiums pronounced in favor of Bon. They were gratified listeners.

By the time he had risen to take his leave, a cool breeze was blowing, accompanied with slight rain. He had sallied forth from his shop without a coat, in his haste; and Mrs. Craft now insisted on his wearing one of her husband's. There was one hanging in the hall, which she brought in.

"It may be a little damp," she said, "having been

moistened by a shower the last time Mr. Craft wore it. It was the night the money was stolen. But it must be dry by this time. You are very welcome to the loan of it, Mr. McCallom."

"I am muckle obliged, madam," he said, putting it on. "It shall be sent back a' safe again."

"Wha would hae thought the guid mon and I had been sae near ane size?" he queried, regarding the garment. "Weel, I maun gang. Guid-bye, leddies, and fair fortune attend ye."

"Hand a wee—hand a wee," he said, turning about at the door. "I wodna skelp awa' wi' anything that belongs here at hame. There maun be tocker i' the pockets for a' I ken. Here's something mair than a napkin, or I'm muckle in error."

"Let me remove it," said Mrs. Craft, and putting her hand in the pocket, took something out. With a face becoming pale, she sank down on a chair.

"It's the purse! It's my husband's lost purse!" she exclaimed.

"And all its contents!" she added, pouring out the thirty Spanish dollars and the two bank notes on the table.

"The Laird be thankit!" shouted Colin. "He makes the crooked straight, an' the rough smooth. Thanks be to the Laird for a' His mercies."

Florence had hid her face in her hands. Miss Clarke had jumped from her seat, and was clap-

ping hers like an enthusiast at a play. In the midst of the scene, Mr. Craft reentered. He stood to gaze at the glittering pile upon the table.

"Leuk! leuk, neebour Craft," said Colin. "A bonny meal the guid wife hae spread for ye. Leuk—leuk, mon!"

Peter was silent. He could do nothing more than bite his nails.

"Which o' the twa bills was it Peter, the merchant mon had at the Court? If I ken aright, ye said on the witness stand, ane o' them had a blot, or a discoloration; ye maun remember? It was on ane corner o' the bill. Will ye do us the favor to leuk at them now, and point out the blot ye spak' o'? There they be, mon. Show us the discoloration on the corner, will ye? Deil of a blot, Mr. Craft, can ye see on ane note or tither. So I leave ye to simmer it ower in your mind as ye best can, and mickle good may it do ye, mon. Now, I maun scuttle awa' and publish the guid news the whyles. So I bid you guid-bye, leddies."

In short space of time, the saddler had sown the intelligence of the fortunate discovery broadcast over the neighborhood.

Miss Clarke, a few hours afterward, set out for Antioch. Stopping at the residence of Corporal Girty, she had the pleasure of his company by the way.

They found the widow alone. With spectacles on nose, she was intent on deciphering some written lines before her.

"When I went to school," she began, "people were instructed to make their letters according to copy. There was no difficulty in making out the meaning of what was put on paper. But time has made changes, and some of them of little value. Now, here is a bit of writing; two, indeed, that amount to nothing with me. I can't make out three words in ten. Miss Clarke, thee is my superior in education, *do* try what thee can make of them."

We copy one of the pieces, which Miss Clarke read aloud:

"My Dear Madam:

"Never have I taken my pen in hand with more emotion than now, as I sit down to write this letter. The strange intelligence, just circulated throughout our vicinity, has fallen like a thunder-clap upon us. No one feels at heart a greater throb of joy than your humble servant. I congratulate you on the disclosure. I had all along a doubt in my mind; but now in its place find a satisfaction I can't express in words.

"You will please, at once, hand the enclosed to Bon Madden, whom I hope to greet to-morrow morning, at his post of duty, as general superintendent and manager of all my business affairs.

The salary shall be satisfactory to him, and will be prepaid. I *must* be relieved from the anxiety my numerous branches of business bring upon me, and am truly happy in committing them to the hands of one who so well deserves my confidence. I hope he will be on hand to-morrow morning. Please present him my respects.

“With great regard,

“Your humble servant,

“PIXLEY CHAFFIN.

“P. S.—I shall need a business partner before long, and am not slow to inform you my choice will fall upon him.”

It was the happy privilege of the visitors to explain to Mother Madden what the strange intelligence was, that the letter spoke of. And their further privilege to join with her in rejoicing over an event that had lifted the cloud of infamy lately fallen on the reputation of her darling boy. When the flood of mutual thanksgiving had in a measure subsided, the visitors made inquiry after Bon. They must see him forthwith. Mother Madden bent low her head in silence.

“Where is he?” demanded Corporal Girty.

“Gone.”

“Gone?”

“How could a boy of spirit live *here?*” asked the widow.

CHAPTER X.

"2nd clown. But is this law?

1st clown. Ay, marry is't; crowner's quest law."

[*Further extracts from the journal of Molly Clarke.*]

It was the second day after the discovery of Bon's innocence and departure had set the neighborhood agog, that I was sitting with Mother Madden, when Corporal Girty entered. He seemed something depressed in spirits, and had not much to say. After a while, supposing probably he deemed me slack in giving an answer to his proposal of marriage, I told him I had a word to communicate, and requested him to step out with me under the white oak. He retired with me willingly.

"Mr. Girty," I began, when seated at his side, "I have given the matter of your kind proposal full consideration. I am happy to inform you I should regard it an honor to become your wife. I am therefore willing to unite my fortunes with yours."

"Sorry you've decided the matter in that way," he replied.

"How is that?" I demanded in astonishment.

"Something in the way," was his answer.

"There is? Then, why did you propose to me? Or rather, why have you trifled with me? These are not things of jest."

"No trifling, on my word of honor, Miss Clarke. Indeed, no trifling. That's not in my line. And besides, you are the last person in this world I would think of trifling with. I know better."

"It looks differently to me. I can see it in no other light."

"Let me explain. It is said, circumstances alter cases. It has been so with me. I thought to settle down. But the difficulty is, I can't. What has a man, pushed from pillar to post, as I shall be, in want of a wife? It would drive her to distraction."

"You both astonish and humiliate me, Corporal Girty," I said, rising to my feet. "Let me say a few words before leaving you—leaving you forever. If I had not considered you a man of honor, never would I have listened to your offer for a moment. I should have regarded it as cause of offense. I don't hide from you the sentiment of wonder and amazement your strange conduct excites within me. I can, with difficulty, realize that the respect I have so long entertained for you is to be laid aside forever. And that the mere mention of your name should hereafter bring to my heart nothing better than a qualm of aversion."

"Why! why, now!" pleaded he. "Sit down again. We're only getting things in a tangle. What a strange way you have of talking! I don't

get hold of the thread exactly. I would marry you, Miss Clarke, ten times over, if I could. But I can't. It's not myself that makes the trouble. It's other people."

"Who? What people?" I demanded with considerable fervor.

"Why; my own kith and kin. And I was going to say, the earth was covered with them. At any rate, a regiment of them in every town in New England."

"Saying anything against *me*? What do they know of me, that they raise the difficulty you speak of?"

"Know of *you*! They don't know you from Adam. Never heard of you, I guess. If I ever mentioned your name to them, it was to put you on a level with the angels. You are one to *me*. You've made a bright path for me, Miss Clarke. I shall bear you in mind always. Until I saw you, women were nothing to me. But you had taken my heart from me before I knew what I was about. No, Miss Clarke, my kindred know nothing of you. I had looked to the day that I could march into their ranks with you at my side. I'm but a rough sort of man many think, but my heart is pure and its love burns with a bright flame. It was of your kindling; and will never die out. O, my dear friend, and here you speak to me with blunt words. You don't know you tread on my

very life. The ocean will be between us soon. All its waters though can't wash away the love that burns in my heart."

"The ocean!" I responded. "What of the ocean?"

"Let me explain it, Miss Clarke. All the Girty's in the Eastern States, and a host they are, have held a sort of State convention, and taken action. It's about a large estate over in England, that is thought to belong to us here in America. So a fund was raised to send some one over, and run the thing through chancery. I think they say, a chancery suit takes from five to ten years; and from that on to a man's lifetime. I may never live to see its end, you know."

"What have you to do with it, Mr. Girty?"

"I? That's just it. This army of Girty's have pitched on me to go over and put the thing through. If the suit is won, I'm to have one thousand dollars in addition to my share, and all my expenses borne. If the suit comes out at the little end of the horn, I'm to have two dollars a day and expenses paid. So that, you see, knocks the matter of having a wife on the head."

"It does?"

"Don't it? How else do you figure it out?"

"Is *this* your reason for coming to me with a withdrawal of your offer?"

"This, and nothing more. I thought it quite enough."

"I wish, Corporal Girty, you had mentioned it sooner in the course of our interview."

"I wish I had. The fact is, I put it off long as I could to save your feelings, Miss Clarke. But it couldn't be dodged. So the whole line is out now. I couldn't go away without letting you know. I didn't want to keep you from finding some other man."

"I don't want any other man."

"So! But I shall not be here."

"I know that, Mr. Girty. You will find *me* here on your return, however."

"Don't tell me! *Wait* for me, do you mean? That can't be possible. Now, *would* you wait?"

"Why not? Of course. Wait for you, Corporal? I'd wait as long as Jacob did for Rachel. And I confirm the promise by this kiss upon your cheek."

[Here closes our quotation from the journal.]

About the same hour, an incongruous assemblage was gathered on the tavern porch. The trial and the late disclosure were being discussed. Cobe Stott, sitting on the head of an empty mackerel cask, was ventilating his legal lore.

"I call the whole thing in question, and did at the time," he was saying. "I had no chance to get at the Judge before he made his charge to the jury. While he was charging, I tried in several ways to catch his eye, but failed.

"You all remember that charge, gentlemen? It was well enough for a young man, lately raised to the bench. But put it beside the charge *I* delivered on the trial of Theophilus Rat! There was a laying down, by me, of legal precepts after the best style of my Lord Bacon. I'll tell you where the leak was in Judge Nesbitt's bucket. He made a clear high-jump over the *animus*. Yes, sirs, over that all-important point of the *animus*. I saw it the moment he ran himself aground. I would have given a dollar for the privilege of being at his elbow. The case, don't you all see, hadn't an ounce of *animus* in it. And how does my Lord Coke lay it down? 'The *animus*, in all charges of a criminal nature,' says this ornament of English jurisprudence, 'is the very jit of the matter.' I don't precisely like that word *jit*. If I had been in his place, I'd have invented one with a longer tail. But no matter. Coke was a respectable lawyer, for the time he lived in. Side by side with us of the present day, I don't think he would have been any very great shakes.

"But coming back to the case in hand, I ask you, gentlemen, how could Bon Madden be held

accountable for an *animus* that wasn't in his case? It's only an instance of how trials go on in a slipshod way, that brings Courts into disrepute. If I had been on the bench that day, the prisoner would have gone out of that Court with his colors flying at the masthead. I'd have put it fair and square on the *animus*. That, and your *malo animo*, (a feather of the same wing,) are the sublimest points ever raised in the administration of justice. Any lawyer, with half supply of brain, if he weaves the *malo animo* into his case, carries it against law and testimony combined. I've known dozens of rascals acquitted on the *malo animo* alone. It's a great thing, gentlemen. I may say it's the sheet-anchor of human liberty. My very bones ached to see the case wigglewagging by the hour, like a tailless kite, heels over head, and upside down, because the attorney of Bon Madden forgot to bring in his *malo animo*."

"A' vera guid—vera guid law, na doot, Mr. Stott," interposed Colin McCallom, as the speaker paused to renew his quid. "But what wad ye do, mon, when the testimony was a' against the party, and nane in his favor?"

"There you're off your pins, Mr. McCallom. What's testimony, when it runs foul of standard law? It must clear the track and get out of the way. I'm speaking of testimony that *is* testimony. Not the kind of hotchpot we had in this case.

For instance, look at the testimony of that young Chaffin. It was nothing but tracks, tracks, tracks, from beginning to end. Is a man to be condemned on tracks? If a man's tracks are to be brought up in judgment against him, he'd better buy a mule and saddle and ride. And besides, isn't one man's tracks just like another's? I put the point in all candor. Yet old Craft and his chicken could see nobody's foot there but Bon's. Did the old dolt ever attempt anything in his life, but he put his *own* foot in it?"

"I grant ye a' that," said McCallom, as the other stopped to spit, "but do ye no' ken the laddie himsel' said he made them? Na but what I'm e'en as guid a frien' o' Bon's as yoursel', or any ither mon, Mr. Stott. But he said they were his ain tracks."

"There, I join issue with you, Mr. McCallom. Bon was not examined as a witness. Not even sworn. And more than that, under duress. Under *duress*, sir. Who ever heard of a man telling the truth under duress? Would even George Washington himself, if on trial, be obliged to answer about his tracks? No, sir; nothing about himself. He couldn't even be asked if he was born the twenty-second day of July."

"The wrong date, Mr. Stott," said a bystander. "It was the twenty-second of February."

"May be—I was not present," returned Cobe. "Yes; come to think about it, it *was* February. It behooves me to remember it, and with pride. Let me tell you something, gentlemen, and I hope you'll never forget it. George Washington, Christopher Columbus and *I*, were born the same month. *Three* of us! I doubt if the like happen again in a thousand years."

"They say Peter Craft is to be appointed Chaffin's superintendent," remarked the tavern keeper, as Cobe paused a little.

"He! never," returned Cobe. "Craft superintendent? If he ever is, you may put me down as a bundle of straw. I shall talk with Pixley about it. Who says so?"

"He says it himself," answered the landlord.

"Let him superintend his own affairs a little. That man is sinking in the mud, deeper and deeper every day. Mark me, gentlemen, if in a year's time he isn't floored flat as a pancake. Why, his property is already covered over with judgments and mortgages. Yes, a pile of them a foot high. Pixley knows what he is about."

"Ye seem vera familiar wi' the courts o' law, Mr. Stott," said Colin. "I wad muckle like ane o' these days, to hae a chat wi' ye, touching the orators ye hae heard. Which o' them was maist eloquent, Mr. Stott?"

"I can tell you in a word, Mr. McCallom. You've come to the right source for information. Of all men, give me Hamilton and Burr, of New York. Ah, gentlemen, Hamilton was the cock of the walk. I heard him in the great libel case in Philadelphia. Didn't he lay down the principles of law like a giant? True, if I could have seen him a few moments before he began, I could have given him a point or two that would have made fur fly. But he did things up brown, nevertheless.

"I met him half an hour after he was through, coming out of an oyster cellar. 'Bully for you,' I said, clapping him on the back; 'didn't yer give it to them under the fifth rib?' I supposed he would thank me for the compliment. On the contrary, what do you think he did? It's not worth while to ask. You couldn't guess in a dog's age. Why, he wheeled on me like a rat in a corner. 'You infernal, ragged rascal,' said he, (I happened to have on this old linsey-woolsey coat,) 'you impertinent scullion; what do you mean, and *who* are you?' 'Pshaw! General,' was the response of your humble servant, 'don't you know Cobe Stott, Esquire? Didn't you see me all the time, sitting back in the crowd, with an eye on you? Come back into the cellar, Alec, and take a dozen roasted on the shell.'"



CHAPTER XI.

"When absent far from those we love,
Is there a charm the heart can fether;
When years roll on and still we rove;
Is there no cure? Ah! yes—a letter.

[*From Miss Clarke's journal again.*]

I felt both surprise and pleasure in witnessing the effect produced by that kiss on Corporal Girty's cheek. He sat some moments in mute astonishment. His eyes gathered a little moisture. His emotion seemed unfitted for expression in words. He modestly reached forth his sun-browned hand and took my own. More than tongue could have disclosed was in that grasp.

"I—I can't," he said at length, in a confused way, "believe it. It's all so strange. I've long time doubted if it could ever be. The fact is, I rather thought it couldn't. To tell the truth, Corporal Girty has told me so a hundred times."

"It seems you can't always rely on the Coporal's word."

"No. I'll be on my guard in future. But you know how another gets the upperhand of you? Months ago he put in his say. 'Corporal Girty,' were his words, 'move up your battalion with due care. There's danger ahead. Keep an eye always to windward,' says he. 'Don't let any of the De-

lilacs get you by the hair. If you do, I'll cut your acquaintance.'

"And so you'll really wait, Miss Clarke?"

"Yes, I'll wait. You may rely on it."

The Corporal moved off with a step unusually elastic.

It so chanced I was obliged to leave for my New England home, the same day Corporal Girty set out to take passage for the ports of England at New York. As far as the latter city we went together in company. I stood on the wharf to see the ship he sailed in weigh anchor. I witnessed his parting salute, half a mile off down the bay, as he stood waving his hat on the taffrail.

Florence Craft promised, on my departure, to write me frequently. She kept that promise. I will here quote from a letter I received a month after reaching New London :

"O, dear! what a weary world! I am pining away. Nobody to talk to. I am dying with constant grief over my losses. Think of what I have lost! The two most dear to my heart. No news at all of that one first to leave. I am persuaded Mother Madden knows something; but she won't tell. I ask her every time I see her. I reconcile his loss a trifle in memory of the chastisement he bestowed on that presumptuous young Briton.

Bon rises in my regard every time I think of it. Calling him a *thief*!

"It nearly makes me crazy to think the last time I saw him I refused to speak to him. I can't get over it. But then it was all so sudden. We didn't look for him that day. I was taken by surprise. And when I *did* turn my head to speak, he was gone! Innocent and persecuted lad. And departed with a new arrow in his heart. And sent there by *my* hand! I can't forgive myself the cruelty. Sometimes it keeps me from sleep. I can only find ease in the sympathy I know to exist in the hearts of yourself and Aunt Deborah.

"We are not a very happy household just now. But I forbear to enter upon particulars."

I well knew to what this last remark had reference. Peter Craft was the object of general opprobrium. It made him ill-natured and morose. His family were, in consequence, the greater sufferers.

I pass the many letters following the foregoing, in which her miseries were fully detailed, and quote from one I received at the end of my first year's absence:

"Everything much the same as when I last wrote you. Perhaps a little more peace at our fireside. But busy and malicious tongues still wag. No news from Bon. I am beginning to

fear he has never heard of the disclosure. Isn't it hard if he is still living devoid of this information?

"Mr. Pixley Chaffin is very kind and courteous to me. This greatly pleases me, to tell the truth. I need some kindness, and even relish his. But the son, the officious and intermeddling Augustus, I hold at a respectable distance. He and his sister called lately. I had to be civil. It is not easy to overlook the drama in which he took such active part.

"What do you hear further of Corporal Girty? And has he written more concerning the great trial? I hope he will come back with his pockets well filled with British gold. We miss him much."

I copy from one of her letters at the end of the *second* year:

"I would give the world, if it was mine, to see you again. When are you coming back? I want to talk over a hundred matters.

"The old story. Nothing of Bon. It is wearing on me. It makes me dejected and moody. Why don't he write? I'm sometimes inclined to fear he is not alive. Not a very pleasing thought. Would you not suppose, if in being, he would by this time have communicated with somebody here? Pardon me for harping so much on one string."

From her letter at the close of the *third* year:

"Homeless and houseless! Sad words! Until now I have never weighed their dread meaning. *Could* I perform a more reluctant task than in giving you explanation?

"Yes, the avalanche is down upon us at last. Some weeks ago the Sheriff, (my heart will always thrill at mention of the title,) came, in exercise of his high authority. Soon the sheds and roadside trees were placarded with his bills and notices. I tore down one of the glaring missives that he had posted on the front of our dwelling.

"Well; lands and tenements, horses and cattle, farming utensils and household goods, fell under the fatal hammer. Father's many creditors could wait no longer, and they swept clean away all of our earthly possessions. Nor did they stop there. For the remaining unpaid balance, they took his body. He is now an inmate of the county prison. Will a time ever come when imprisonment for debt will be expunged from the statute book of the Commonwealth?

"I made a visit to father yesterday. And something I witnessed caused an electric thrill that almost overpowered me. It was a handwriting on the wall of his cell. Two lines of Joana Bailles:

"Mine after life! what is mine after life?
My day is closed! the gloom of night is come!
Bon Madden."

"Ah! I knew the once proud ambition whose overthrow was paraphrased in these lines. For, indeed, a prouder and more noble spirit was never lodged in a young heart. He always told me he was to be a grand man when he grew up. One day, when we were quite young, as we played at the roadside, an officer passed with a convicted felon in manacles. I playfully asked him, as he gazed on the spectacle, how he would like to be in that man's place. 'That man's, Florry?' he returned, with horror in his face; "*that* man's? I'd sooner *die*. Don't speak of it again.'

"Mother and I have been taken in at Aunt Deborah's. She is very kind and so is Uncle Haley. How can we ever repay them?

"Augustus Chaffin calls often. I think he is sincerely sorry for us. But I can't be as gracious as he seems to wish. He keeps his eye on me at church; and would like to show me much attention. But I am not to be hunted down. Indeed, I believe he has a sincere regard for me. But you know where my heart is."

I copy from a letter at the end of the *fourth* year:

"I was yesterday at Mother Madden's. I begged her, if she knew anything of Bon, to let me know. From her answer, I was led to think she really knows as little about him as the rest of us.

"But my chief purpose in writing this letter is

to communicate some very interesting news. With all our sorrows, a little happiness has found us out. Yes, my own friend, a ray of sunlight has broken through the clouds. It came from the British quarter. Augustus Chaffin came to us last week to say he had commenced a movement in our behalf. He was going next day, with money to pay off the balance for which father was bound, and take him out of prison. Out of that same cell to which he was instrumental in consigning poor Bon, and to which he has been doomed himself. So turns the wheel of fortune.

"Well; let me return. The tenant, on the farm adjoining the Chaffin mansion, would be moving out in a few days. That he had prevailed on his father to allow us to occupy the place on exceedingly advantageous terms. We were to have it with all the farming stock and implements and household furniture, rent free. A man would be employed by him to manage the dairy for our benefit. I am free to say the kind proposition has relieved us of a heavy burden of anxiety. I *did* thank Augustus in commendable terms for his generosity.

"I am sure Bon will never return. No news of him."

Let me copy from a letter at the termination of the *fifth* year:

"Our season on the farm has been very fortunate

and advantageous. We are positively coining money. Father is a new man. He rises with the dawn, and pursues his business faithfully. Mother's health is improved, and she enjoys life more than at any time of the past. The Chaffin's are all very kind, and have placed us under a thousand obligations.

"But, I have reserved the great point of my communication to the last. I must state it as it is. Augustus has made me an offer of marriage. I made him my answer. It was, that he could not consistently ask for a woman's hand without her heart. I supposed this would end the matter. No, he still urges his plea. Is it to be supposed I should be utterly devoid of some embarrassment? You know the position it would elevate me to. And I am not blessed with worldly means. Must I let so good an offer slip? What *am* I to do? Father urges the connection. Mother says I must do as I think best. Aunt Deborah declines advice. How I wish you were here. Must I wait a lifetime for one of whom it is impossible to obtain information? Should I marry first and trust to a growth of love afterward? Alas! I love but one. Do come and counsel me. I am wretched and perplexed. I am beset on all sides. No—no; I won't throw myself away. I'm not ashamed of the affection of a dozen years. The old idol has yet place in my heart. My Bon—*my*

Bon! My darling! I would traverse the continent afoot to reach him. By day and by night I ruminate on our past. Our walks and talks. Our games and pastimes. Let poverty hold me in its clutch, if it must be so. I'll wait for my boy, or die an old maid."

I copy from a letter received a *month* later :

"Last night I was at a large party given by the Chaffin's. All passed off admirably. A violin player was sent for, and Mr. Pixley Chaffin opened the ball with *me* as his partner. Need I ask for anything further in this world? I can assure you these honors are not matters of indifference. You should have seen the marked deference he paid me. To say a word in your private ear, there were some ladies present who felt a trifle envious. I danced a dozen times with Augustus. He dances with much grace. And, he assured me, I was perfect. He did me the distinguished honor of escorting me down to supper. And more than all that, escorted me home.

"Since writing the above, three days ago, an exciting report is in circulation. It is the death of Bon. It seems he lost his life in crossing a river up in the lake country. Mr. Pixley Chaffin was informed of it by a drover. The person drowned was about eighteen years of age; and the death occurred, as near as could be made out, some six

weeks or two months after the date of Bon's leaving here. A letter was found on the person, the superscription on which bore the name of Madden. The first name not remembered. The elder Mr. Chaffin has no doubt of its being our Bon.

"I have a strange feeling in penning these particulars. It is cutting asunder the cord of hope; and surrounding me with a cloud of gloom. When I think of it, (and when do I not?) I have a sensation that I am alone—that all is lost.

"P. S.—Augustus was just in. He is desirous of presenting me a casket of jewelry. I told him *no*. That it would not be consistent with propriety in me to receive it. He was grieved at the refusal, and went away much depressed. Poor fellow! I know what he suffers. Have not I had my share? Can I ever feel the current of love setting towards another? Time must solve the problem."

Though I remained at New London some months after the receipt of the last quoted letter, very few and very brief were the epistles of my Bucks County friends. This gave rise to various surmises on my part that I was anxious about. It did not appear seemly in me to ask questions, so I remained without information.

[*We here lay aside Miss Clarke's journal.*]

CHAPTER XII.

"He was red hot with drinking;
So full of valor, that he smote the air
For breathing in his face."

There is a small town in the extreme northern portion of the State of Vermont, contiguous to the Canada line, called East Highgate. It lies on the banks of the Missisquoi, usually pronounced *Missisco*, a small river flowing from the Canada side, but delivering its waters into Lake Champlain, within the boundaries of Vermont.

About the time Miss Clarke was reading her last letter from Florence Craft, a scene was transpiring in this northern town and its suburbs. Our former acquaintance, Jack Vanskiver, had reached the place; and his exuberance of animal spirits, aided by other spirits, had aroused the attention of the populace. The horse and gig, together with all but a pittance of the pecuniary outfit, had passed down that hungry vortex of his fortunes, his throat. The dress suit of Pixley Chaffin, in which he was arrayed at the start, was now a tattered mass of shreds. His hat had assumed a diversity of shapes; and he had left him but one shoe.

The uncouth vagrant was seen at this place in the middle of the principal street, surrounded by

a throng of shouting boys, wheezing forth in discordant tones:

“There's naught but care on ev'ry han',
In every hour that passes, O,
What signifies the life o' man,
An' 'twere na for the lasses, O.
Green grow the rashes, O!
Green grow the rashes, O!
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
Are spent among the lasses, O!”

The merchant, before whose door the motley crowd had paused, stepped out hastily and ordered the vocalist “to stop his infernal din, and clear out.” Vanskiver, interrupted in the midst of a stanza, evinced astonishment. This was succeeded by a quick return for the indignity offered him. Without a word, he stepped forward and knocked off the other's hat. The merchant's wig came off with it, and the circumstance was greeted by a general shout. When he sprang up to wipe out the stain, by an attack on the assailant, he found the latter standing in approved pugilistic attitude, awaiting the assault.

“Come hon, Mr. Baldpate,” he cried, “hup with your flippers, my Marquis of Queensbury, and let me work a button 'ole hover your blinkers. Come a'ead, old tape and calico!”

The merchant gathered up his hat and wig and retired within his shop. Mr. Vanskiver tarried to sing a few stanzas more of “Green grow the rashes, O,” and then left the field of action. At a

low dramshop down the street, he paused and partook of refreshment.

His performances in the town were eclipsed by those in the suburbs. Making his way in the middle of the road, he met a Yankee tin-peddler. The highway, at the point of meeting, had but a single wagon track, and the peddler no option but following it. Nevertheless, Mr. Vanskiver ordered the peddler to turn out with his horse and wagon, and leave him the unobstructed right of way. The other was indiscreet enough to show ill temper and call Vanskiver by a bad name. This led to bad results. The latent fire of the Saxon burst into flame. The peddler was dragged down from his seat; the horse cut loose from the vehicle; the wagon overturned, and its contents scattered hither and thither over something like the half of an acre of ground. The area about looked as if a whirlwind had made it a visit. When the town Constable with a *posse* of citizens arrived, the victor was found sitting on the fallen trunk of his adversary, brandy bottle in hand, proudly contemplating the debris of the battle-field.

The arrest of the turbulent stranger was not made without a fierce struggle. The British lion has always been troublesome in the handling. But numbers prevailed in the end. The valiant Vanskiver was taken back to the town, covered

with blood and dirt, bleeding copiously from a gash on the temple. He was lodged in an out-house, at the tavern where he obtained his brandy, and left in charge of the stable groom. He grew weak and feverish. Before sunset his symptoms were of unfavorable augury.

"Look 'ere, boy," he said, "I've a word to say. I believe there's somethink wrong about my 'ead."

"Has been the whole day," returned the stable lad. "A pretty considerable bit of a hole in it."

"That makes a couple, then. If I never 'ad 'ad a 'ole in my 'ead at all, I'd been better hoff. If you can't let me 'ave the brandy, the next best thing is a minister. I've seen several in my day—'eard one preach when I was young—but never 'ad use for one till now. 'Ave you a minister 'ere?"

"Yes. A peeler, I tell you. The crack of the course in these parts. Smart as a whip, sir. I'll get him for you. No, sir, you couldn't be in better hands. He'll rub you down till you're bright as a new buckle."

"Fetch 'im, boy—fetch 'im. I'm getting somethink weak. I can't 'ang on much longer. Fetch me the minister."

The lad retired and hastened after the clergyman. He soon brought him to the wounded man. They were left together.

It was not long before the minister came forth, and hunted up an attorney. The sick man had need of one. There was something on his mind, he told the lawyer. He wanted to know if he couldn't make a confession, and have it reduced to writing, that it might be used as testimony in a Court of Justice.

He was informed by the lawyer that his testimony could be perpetuated. He would have his statement written out, and put on record; and a copy made out and certified under the provisions of the act of Congress. This could be read in any Court in the Union.

This was all done. By the same hour next day, Mr. Vanskiver had the certified record.

For two days following, the minister faithfully attended the dying man. A physician was called. He examined the wound. He pronounced it fatal. But a day or two was the man's limit of life, as he declared.

At the minister's last visit, the patient seemed better. He was in possession of all his mental powers. As the other sat by him, he was the target of the patient's gaze. His long and anxious inspection seemed to have a motive.

"Mr. Minister," he at last remarked, "when you kneeled down 'ere to pray, I hoberved you 'ad two crowns on your 'ead?"

"Yes. Two crowns. Not a usual thing, I believe."

"And 'ave you, just above the elbow of the left harm, a kind of spot—a ring like, big as a cherry?"

"Yes. It's always been there."

"God forgive me!" shouted the other, vainly trying to sit up. "God forgive me! 'Ere's my 'and—'ere's my 'and! Take my 'and, and the Lord bless you. O! now I shall die in peace. Who'd 'ave thought there would ever be peace for poor old Jack Vanskiver? Time's hup with me—time's hup! The old un'll never come to the scratch again. Never."

With sudden haste, he tore loose the girdle round his body, and handed it to the minister. Also gave him the certified record.

"I'm dying—dying, minister! My last round. Keep that—keep it safe. Let a poor wretch 'ave your 'and once more."

With the last grasp, the respiration ceased. With eyes fixed on his ministerial attendant, he passed away.

Few were present at the funeral. But the minister, with due solemnity, and under sway of much feeling, discharged his clerical duties over the body of the vagrant.



CHAPTER XIII.

"I'd ask, but dare not. Not knowing may be best.
But yet my hungry soul yearns after what
May be its bane. Speak; let me hear all."

Towards the close of the last century, a new religious sect, led by John Wesley, had excited public attention and gained hosts of adherents in Great Britain. George Whitefield, the tavern keeper's son of the Bell at Gloucester, had already crossed the ocean, to break up the fallen ground of the new world. He was followed by the indefatigable Francis Asbury, who, as bishop of the new fold, established the foundations of a church, since enlarged to vast proportions.

One of the new modes of worship introduced by the followers of Wesley, was that of the camp-meeting. It was held under the trees of the primeval forest. A board stand was put up for the accommodation of the preachers, and board seats served for the audience. Cloth tents, arranged in a circle, enclosing the auditorium, were put up by the members or those of other denominations.

Such a meeting, in one of the groves upon the Neshaminy, and a few miles only from Haley's, was in progress a few weeks subsequent to the events narrated in the last chapter. Mr. Pixley

Chaffin, though not in membership relation with the Methodists, had a tent there. So had the Haley's. Deborah Haley, liberal in all things, showed favor towards the growing church, and was free to speak in their social as well as public means of grace. On this occasion, Mother Madden was not as usual one of her guests; but Miss Clarke was; lately returned from New London. Corporal Girty arrived the second day after the commencement of the meeting. On his appearance at Mrs. Haley's tent, all were desirous of knowing the result of his business errand to England.

"It's easily told," said the Corporal. "I got there after a voyage of forty days, sick all the time and turned nearly inside out, to find myself in a city that I couldn't see for the fog. I know no more about it to this day than I do of Jerusalem. I asked my landlord to recommend me to a good and reliable lawyer. He sent me to a lawyer. A man with a good set of teeth, but stumpy in build. I stated my case, and handed over my papers. He said he would look them over carefully, and would see me in the course of two months. I told him I had come a long way and would like dispatch. He said the case was one of unusual importance, and he would like full time for reflection. Before I left him, he took a dip in my pocket book. I thought he went pretty deep;

but important cases might call for it. The fact was, he took about a quarter of all I had.

"Well, I called after two month's waiting, and my lawyer didn't know me. I stated the case. He said he had never heard of it before. Didn't know I'd left any papers. I begged him to look in a certain pigeon hole, where I saw him put them at my other visit. After a deal of grumbling and delay, he stuck his fat hand in the pigeon hole and pulled the papers out. He showed all his teeth at this, and asked my pardon. He was sorry for the neglect; but in six weeks time he would give them a thorough examination, and let me know the result. He took another dip in the pocket book.

"After six weeks, I called again. Lawyer said he was exceedingly sorry, but the papers had been mislaid, and only found that very day. The case required the most careful examination, and that examination he intended giving it. He would begin at once, and I might look for a letter from him in the course of four weeks. Took another dip.

"I began to fear my bank would break under such a pressure. But I waited for that letter. Waited till nearly sick. I picked up my hat one morning and sailed out in the fog, not in the best humor. I walked into the lawyer's back room without knocking. He was delighted to see me.

He said he was about sitting down to look the matter through. He believed I had a good case, and good cases were worthy of good fees. He had a call for money that morning, and would be much obliged if I could advance a part of his small charge. This dip I couldn't stand. I said *no*. He jumped up, and calling me a mean cur, threw the bundle of papers in my face. I picked up the bundle and put it in my pocket. Then, telling him a Yankee was not used to putting up with British insolence, I proceeded to pull the gentleman's nose. Probably it had never been in such tight papers before, for he bawled out like a hound. In rushed three of his clerks, who said I must leave the room or they'd put me out in a hurry. I told them I wasn't just ready to go out myself, but if they didn't, and go without a word, I'd thresh the whole squad. They retired. Mr. Attorney now found his teeth again, and extended his hand. He was pleased with genuine pluck, he said, wherever he met with it. I told him I had a bit more on hand he hadn't seen yet. He would be pleased, just then and there, to hand me back every cent I'd paid him, or he wouldn't go out of that room with a skin full of sound bones. He begged to explain. I told him we'd let the explanation slide; and pulled out my landlord's bill for board, all properly receipted. I added on my lost time at so much a day. Telling my gen-

tleman he might put that to the sum total, and I'd say nothing about his visit the day before, and what took place between him and my honest host, in room number seven, over a bottle of peach brandy. This capped the rick. He handed over the money and I walked out."

"And nothing was done about your suit?" asked Miss Clarke.

"I got out of the hands of the two rascals, you see, and employed a good lawyer. We gained the case in the lower Court, but the other party carried it into the higher one. It may take a year to get it through that. When it does come out, I'm going over again to pocket the funds. Now, let me ask how the camp-meeting flourishes?"

"Bravely," replied Miss Clarke. "A precious time. The work of grace increases by the hour. Yesterday, in the forenoon, we heard brother Lucas on faith. In the afternoon, brother Barnum on grace. Brother Thompkins held forth at night on repentance. This morning, the presiding elder will occupy the stand. Brother Cutler in the afternoon, and brother Gilbert at night."

The Corporal was called away from the grove, and did not return until evening. Miss Clarke then took him with her to hear brother Gilbert. They found convenient seats, and awaited the promised discourse.

"Can a greenhorn like that do anything?" asked the Corporal in a whisper, as the young minister arose.

"I think he would do better without his dark glasses."

The preacher announced a text from the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel—"Son of man, can these dry bones live?"

Corporal Girty reached for his hat.

"Sit still," whispered Miss Clarke. "Sit still."

"No place for me," returned the other.

"*Do* sit down. What's the matter?"

"*Bones!*" was the answer, with a sort of shiver.

"They'll not hurt you. Listen."

"I'll stand one or two of them. But at the third bone I'm off. What does the fellow mean?"

The sermon was commenced. Whenever the objectionable word occurred, the Corporal made a sudden movement of rising. His friend made every effort to keep him quiet.

"It's a hard dose," he said finally. "I can't stand many more of them. He seems to have brought a cart load. Let me go out."

"Stay five minutes longer, Corporal. Just five minutes."

"With reverence we contemplate this holy volume," the minister was saying, as he pointed to

the bible, "a lamp that lightens and brightens our way to salvation. No part or portion of the sacred book must we regard as given in vain. None of the works of Him who created and ordained all things, are in vain. Each chapter, each verse is of God, found within this book of books. Throughout its pages, from first to last, we trace the marvelous doings of our creator. And can we not this night find instruction by survey of that wild waste the Prophet saw? Was it in vain the valley lay before him, strewn with its remnants of mortality? Gazing in imagination on the wondrous scene, would not we, as in his case, urge the same inquiry, 'can these bones live again?'"

Here the Corporal again reached for his hat.

"We believe," continued the preacher, "when God speaks and conveys his messages, it is to *all* men and for all *time*. Have we not, therefore, position beside the Prophet, and may we not ask, shall the dead around us live? Our dead in faith and righteousness? Was not that valley, with its fearful burden, alike admonishment to *us* as to the dwellers on the banks of the sacred Jordan? 'These bones are the whole house of Israel,' were the words of Ezekiel. Do they not, therefore, reach down to us?"

The preacher went on with a graphic picture of the calling of the man of Ur of the Chaldees. Of

the people springing from his loins—their sins and captivity—their glory under Solomon, when surrounding nations came to do homage to the anointed of God. And of the declension of Jewish sovereignty into dismemberment. Could restoration reach them after such a fall?

The Corporal was becoming reconciled. He whispered Miss Clarke that he saw the point. He'd sit it out.

"May we not come down to this year of grace?" continued the minister. "Have we no such valleys? Is righteousness so spread over this land that no sign of spiritual death is seen? *Who* are the men that walk this flowery heritage? Are they all men born of the spirit? Are there no unbelievers—backsliders—moralists? Vain question, when around us in myriads are the thoughtless, the prayerless, the unconcerned and giddy. Dry bones, all. And how great the throng of men we admire, the industrious, sober, moral, upright; yet without the love of God in their hearts!"

Here the Corporal nodded his head in assent.

"Pretty near the mark, now," whispered he. "Let's hear him out."

"As we traverse the path of human life," the speaker continued, "how many men do we encounter, who, filled with God's grace, would be

the glory of mankind? As I look out over the congregation, there sits one before me. What good, within his humble sphere, has he not accomplished? Whose heart in its tides ever rises and falls with a swell of emotion more refined and full? Has he not ministered to the widow's wants? Fed and clothed the naked and hungry? Was his door ever barred against his fellow man? Yea, my brethren, let me add this: Has not this man, in the generosity of a noble heart, taken the lost wanderer and outcast to his bosom? Yet, what is all *this*, great and grand as it is in our contemplation, without godliness? May we not, in sadness of heart, say with the Prophet, it is but—"

"Hold on, there, minister," shouted the Corporal, springing up. "Don't say the rest. I own up. I'm the man you're after. Only let me know what I'm to do."

"Behold, saith the Lord," cried the preacher with emotion, "I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews and flesh upon you, and you shall know that I am the Lord. Is there no balm in Giliad? is there no physician there? Come to him—come now, and be healed."

"I'm coming," cried the Corporal, as Miss Clarke, with a trembling hand and bedewed eye, led him forward to the altar.

The sermon came suddenly to an end. A shout in the camp arose. After the Corporal came a throng of seekers. There was abundant work for the ministers at the thronged altar. It was past ten o'clock before the labors there came to a close. The first to find the new and living way, was he who was first to move. And no more effectual laborer then pleaded for others there that night than Corporal Girty.

When at last the throng dispersed, a fruitless hunt he made throughout the camp for brother Gilbert. It was matter of sore regret he was unable to find him.

There was sufficient reason for the inability. As soon as the Corporal had felt the washing of regeneration, and was upon his feet, proclaiming what God had done for him, and was, in earnest tones, beseeching others to come and likewise find peace, the preacher of the evening left the camp. It was not long before he stood knocking at Mother Madden's door. A window was raised, and her voice hailed the applicant for admission, desiring to know who was there.

"Mother! mother!" was his response. "Can you let a wanderer in?"

"Bon! my Bon! Is it my boy?"

"Even so, mother."

Soon was the door flung open, and the weeping

woman had the adopted son once more in her arms. It was some time before either could speak. The elder of the two first found utterance.

"O, my boy! my dear boy! I have long time hoped for this. Heaven has heard my prayers, and the answer has come. Never a day has passed, but my petition has gone on high. The blessing has come at last.

"How this cheers my old heart! Once more are we together, under the same roof. Let us never part again. There is thy chair. Still at the table. It has been there at every meal. And there is thy room; just as thee left it. Thee will find everything in place.

"How thee has grown!"

"Five years, mother, adds to the stature of the young."

"And thee don't shave?"

"A fancy. Not an affectation, mother."

"And thee didn't use to wear glasses?"

"No. Not always."

"And why now?"

"I will have to tell thee. It is not pleasant, but I must. Don't prejudge me; but I am not here as *Bon Madden*. I would ask thee to bear this in mind, and not address me by that name. With disgrace resting on it, I cast it from me. And don't be offended to learn that I am not only here

with another name, but in disguise. I felt that I *must* come back, though bearing the stigma of a felon. My present name is Gilbert. I took it on quitting this abode."

"But thee knows that unfortunate matter was all explained, and thy innocence established?"

"No! How was that?"

"Peter Craft thought the money was in one coat pocket, when in fact it was found in another. Found the very morning thee went away. Indeed, about the same hour."

Mother Madden went on to narrate to the surprised and thankful listener all that had occurred.

"There are other reasons why I prefer to remain Mr. Gilbert. And I am glad that so far I have maintained my incognito. Even Corporal Girty did not know me."

He went on to acquaint the other with the fact that he had attended that day's meeting. Rather, that he was there after nightfall. Not forgetting the conversion of his old friend.

"Shall I tell thee of Florence Craft?" after a silence.

"I hope what thee has to say may be pleasing for me to hear. In good health, no doubt?"

"I believe so. She long and truly mourned thy departure."

"That I expected, mother. I deemed it would be so after reflection. She wouldn't speak to me. But I couldn't blame her for it. It was a heavy blow at parting."

Mother Madden came to the rescue of the maiden. She told him not only of her long years of despondency, but of her creeping into the Court house and fainting away.

"She is Florence Craft still?" inquired the young man.

"Yes. But I don't know for how long a time."

Discomfort was occasioned by this answer. He sat some time doubting if it were wise to question further.

"Will thee hear anything more on that point?"

"All. All there is, mother. Let me hear even the worst."

"I speak not by authority; but it is thought she will soon marry Augustus Chaffin."

The other arose from his chair. He moved a few times across the room.

"Mother," he made out to say, "if thee will excuse me, I will retire. I have had a wearisome day. And I am keeping thee from thy rest. Let us talk more in the morning. So, good-night."



CHAPTER XIV.

“Cold news for me;
Thus are my blossoms blasted in the bud
And catterpillars eat my leaves away.”

In the morning, a long conversation was had between Mother Madden and the returned wanderer. They came to an understanding of Bon's plans in full. She accorded with him in every proposed measure. He was not, for the time being, to be other than Mr. Gilbert. His visits at her house were not to be public. There was cause for all these measures, and for his sake, she willingly yielded. During the forenoon, she sat out alone for the camp ground.

Corporal Girty was delighted to meet her. His heart was overflowing with a new-found bliss.

“*Sister* Madden!” he cried, adopting the impressive epithet of the Christian brotherhood; “sister Madden, how glad I am to see you. I've something wonderful to tell. Lend me an ear, if you please. Yes, something to tell. The queerest thing. You know how it's been with me? Never expected to be anything. Now, I'm a Christian man, sister Madden.”

“Thee could not tell me better news,” was her reply. “How did this all come about?”

“Bones, sister. Bones. I never had a liking for them before. But brother Gilbert held them

up in a new light. It's wonderful what can be got out of them! He's a master hand at the business."

"Who is brother Gilbert?"

"One of the new preachers. There's a bevy of them. But brother Gilbert is the man. I only wish you could have heard him on bones. And I'm puzzled that he can't be found. I've been hunting him half the night and all the morning. You must see brother Gilbert. I'd give half I'm worth to hear that sermon over again. It's tremendous."

In a religious revival it can never be foretold upon whom the visitation of saving grace will fall. The persons looked to as most probable may not be reached; while on the other hand those least expected are first in yielding to the sway of divine grace. When, therefore, Corporal Girty headed the column the night before, the congregation were taken by surprise. That surprise, however, was intensified when a young lawyer, recently admitted to the bar, followed him.

This was an individual heretofore introduced, who, taken under the care of a generous Quaker attorney had, by his liberality, been furnished with means to acquire an academical education, was received in his office as student of law, and had passed his examination with great credit.

This person was Cobe Stott. Now dressed in the garb of a gentleman, with all his animal spirits unconstrained, he had appeared on the camp ground in company with some friends, in search of agreeable entertainment, and to pass a few hours in the society of his old friends. It was the movement of his acquaintance, Corporal Girty, that aroused him. A sudden impulse sprang to life within him; and without a moment's delay, his ardent nature carried him forward. With him, when at the altar, it was a work of earnestness. He sought for salvation, as he did everything else, with all his might. And, as they that seek, find; so was it with Cobe Stott.

A new thing was it for him to realize the changed position in which he found himself placed. It was equally so to others. His late convivial associates were not a little amazed to see their former leader in mirth and jollity now consorting with grave elders and staid ministers of the gospel. It was difficult to realize that Cobe Stott was standing at the altar, with burning zeal and eloquent words, proclaiming the riches of God's grace, and adjuring others to repent and be saved. Or that it was the same man, on his bended knees, breathing forth thanksgivings unto the crucified Redeemer, and beseeching the Spirit to find out and rescue his friends.

The conversation of Mother Madden and the

Corporal was interrupted by the blowing of the horn. The object was to call attention to some notices. They were that brother Lucas would preach at eleven o'clock; brother Garland in the afternoon, and brother Gilbert again in the evening.

"All right," said the Corporal. "Now, sister Madden, you'll hear something."

Bon Madden did not leave the mansion of Antioch until dusk of evening.. When near the camp ground, he sat down, a little aside from the woods path, under a tree. In a few moments he was approached by Augustus Chaffin and Florence Craft. They stopped directly opposite Bon, at the suggestion of the young lady.

"We must not go further," she said. "Let us sit down."

"O, yes; a little further," pleaded the other. "The water fall is just ahead. It's delightful at this time o'day."

"No. I must be back in time for supper. And soon after that, you know, the public services begin."

"I'm sorry you won't go further on," said Augustus.

"Don't feel bad about it. I must hear Mr. Gilbert again. Didn't you like him?"

"No. I don't like him. He's affected."

"O, no. Only earnest. For my part, I was delighted."

"Possibly you think him handsome? All young ministers are handsome."

"I can't say that I approve of that imputation, Augustus. It had better not have been made. If he *were* good looking, what is that to *me*?"

"O, I beg pardon. It was only said in jest."

"But I *do* think Mr. Gilbert handsome. There's no jest in that. Very handsome."

"Glasses and beard, and all?"

"I don't object to them. He may have reasons for wearing both. He's quite tall."

"And you like tall men?"

"I didn't mean that interpretation to follow the remark. I like *good* men, tall or short. I wish I was worthy fellowship with such men as Mr. Gilbert. And I *do* wish he would call at our tent. It seems to me I should enjoy the conversation of Mr. Gilbert. He has a candid and earnest manner that greatly pleases me. I don't conceal the fact that I would like to become acquainted with him. You will hear him again to-night, I suppose?"

"I don't know that I shall," was the reply. "He won't find a Corporal Girty in *me*. Nor a Cobe Stott, either. No doubt he was elated in making such a haul."

"Augustus, I don't like the tone of your remarks. I am sorry to say so. But my feelings are shocked that you indulge in them. What can you urge against anybody, high or low, for joining church? And what do you know of Mr. Gilbert, that ill feeling should be excited against him? Corporal Girty, I believe, has within him a good and noble heart. Nobody can ever prejudice me against him. True, he is not educated; but what person of proper views can blame him for that? As for Cobe Stott, I wish his example might be followed by all the young men of our community. We may see the day that his name is associated with honorable distinction. Come; let us go back."

"Just a moment, first. I want a word about those plans. The builder was over again. He wanted your directions about the size of the conservatory."

"*My* directions?"

"O, excuse me. I don't mean that *he* said anything about you. I don't suppose he knows anything. It was my blunder. But what shall I direct about the size?"

"That's not for me to say. I beg that you will please yourself. Don't let me appear in the matter of your new house in any way. It would offend me to know I was so regarded."

"And he spoke also about the back piazza."

"Well; I make the same answer as to that. Please yourself. Now let us go and hear the sermon."

They departed. The reluctant auditor sat some moments buried in thought.

"Would that I could have avoided this," he said at length. "Was it wrong? I am grieved to think of it. But how could I escape? Let me have consolation in the thought, it was not of my seeking. Yet it is but poor consolation.

"The young man has not changed much. Not much. But the other! From a slight girl, to a woman grown! I think her improved vastly. And I like her sentiments."

Here was another pause.

"Ah, me!" he continued, "what a world of bliss in those past days! And these eyes have looked on her again! A new house going up? Wealth is a paragon. I have a doubt—perhaps an idle doubt—but will she find it *Antioch*? Ah, that time of old! Blissful days! Well remembered Antioch! I left it an hour ago—the tomb where all my joys are buried. The Lord, whom I serve, uphold me! May I do the good I can. Work out the task of life, bearing the burden of an aching heart. Jesus, Master! be thou my stay."

An hour afterward the young minister, seated in the back part of the stand, and something

obscured from view of those in the audience, regarded the assembling crowd with lively interest. He saw his friend Girty escort the old lady of Antioch, and find her a seat near the front. It was beside that of Deborah Haley and her husband. He was filled with delight at seeing Cobe Stott approach. Deborah Haley saw him also, and beckoned him to her side. With a gracious smile and extended hand she saluted the young attorney, and gave him some words that raised a flush of ecstasy upon his face. She placed him beside her on the bench. Pixley Chaffin, with his wife and daughter, took seats near by. He noticed the change that five years had wrought in the last named. Colin McCallom, tall of form and dignified in bearing, also came near. The young minister was not forgetful of the benediction the Scotchman bestowed upon him at the jail door. "The Laird preserve ye, laddie," was the honest saddler's farewell. Had not the invocation thus far been answered?

With the gathering multitude, he was glad to see Granny Lomison and her son, Titus; the latter now grown up, still of lank form. He was of the number of seekers the preceding night. So, also, were Ephriam Allen and Hank Skillet. The beholder's delight was great on seeing these old competitors in the race, so many years ago. But what excited him more, was to see amongst the

petitioners for grace, Theophilus Rat, as he was still called. Cobe Stott readily arose and offered his hand to Theophilus, with an air of genuine respect. He expressed to him his heartfelt joy in finding him there.

Lingering until the last, came young Chaffin and Florence Craft. The former, with a smirk of levity on his features. He was indulging his indifference to the great work in progress by an half audible whistle. His companion was not slow in chiding the act of irreverence. The father of the young man also reproved the impertinence with a frown.

The hour for preaching came. The presiding elder came forward and announced brother Gilbert. The latter stood a moment at the desk with bowed head, and in silence. A contest was going forward in his mind and heart. This audience embarrassed him. Here were before him the companions of his childhood—the associates of his youth—his patrons—his foster mother—the one who had been to him a father—also, those who had been his persecutors—lastly, one whose face awakened a throng of tender memories. *Could* he preach before them?

With a desperate effort he dispelled the cloud. He opened the bible and read his text. It was from the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew. A chapter descriptive of the judgment scene, where

the line of distinction is drawn between the worldly and selfish and the charitable. Where the obligation is laid upon man to aid his fellow man. The text was:

"I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in *prison*, and ye came unto me."

There was a tremor in his delivery of the last part of the sentence, followed by a short pause.

"There, mon, is a nugget for ye!" Colin whispered to the next person on the seat. "Better than a' the gowd an' siller the worl' ower. What's aboon charity? Do ye na ken what the scripture says about the cup o' cauld water?"



CHAPTER XV.

"O, Lord, my boy, my Arthur, my fair son;
My life, my joy, my soul, my all the world;
My widow's comfort, and my sorrow's care."

Under the rays of the morning August sun, the meeting reached its close. All were up and ready for the farewell ceremony. The ministers, about to depart for their stationed fields of labor, the most of them from other Commonwealths, marshalled the host in line. Heading the column, they began their march round the camp. The old and infirm sat at the doors of their tents, to greet the passing array. Singing in full chorus the sacred songs that add the charm to revival labors, the circuit of the grounds was completed. The scores of new converts were enraptured with the ceremony; and with new floods of joy in their hearts, proud to have participation in it.

At the last circuit, the singing over, came the handshaking and farewell words. Passing from tent to tent, it was participated in by each and every one. Tears filled all eyes. The new disciples were loth to part with these servants of the Most High, through whose intercession they had found peace.

Corporal Girty, alive with zeal, looked in vain for his favorite preacher in the ranks. He could

not understand how the latter "let slip so good a thing."

Then came the striking of tents—the gathering up of utensils and implements of cookery, beds and bedding—the loading of wagons and harnessing of teams, and hurrying to and fro in busy tasks of preparation. By roads in all directions the disbanded forces were departing from the camp. Sacred ground! By many long to be remembered. Who carries not with him, in after years, undimmed, remembrance of one sacred spot?—the spot where salvation was found.

The next day, (for who could *work*?) Mother Madden had visitors. As she sat at home, bowed over the return of David from the caverns of Engedi, Corporal Girty, Miss Clarke and Florence Craft entered.

"We have come to see you, Mother Madden," said Molly Clarke, "as all labors are laid aside to-day; and brought you this stranger," with a glance at Florence.

"And a trifle against her will," added the Corporal.

"Aye—I see," replied the old lady, laying aside her spectacles. "All of you be seated. A stranger, indeed. Now, how long has it been, pray, since—"

"Now, don't scold," cried the young lady, interrupting.

"Scold! Thee don't know what's in my heart. How could I?"

"Just that," interposed the Corporal.

"Indeed!" continued Mother Madden. "Who should be nearer my heart? Does thee think age has no memory? Scold *thee*, my dear! What do I not owe thee? Who else has furnished me half the material for happy thoughts? Can I forget the plays, and the shouts, and the romps? And the water wheel, and the play house, with its tables and chairs, and cups and saucers, and china-ware and silver pitcher? The chariots, and saddles and bridles, and furious rides? Why, look up there! thee sees the two hooks that supported the swing? Didn't brother Girty, here, put them up for my darlings?"

"Truth," added the Corporal.

"O, the performances on that swing during the rainy days! Wasn't it terrible to behold what the reckless little creatures did? I see them there at this moment, with eyes starting almost out of their heads, when two little toes touched the ceiling overhead. Ah, those days! marvelous days! When shall I ever—"

"Pray, now, Mother Madden—" began Florence with beseeching look.

"There, now! Why does thee interrupt me?"

"That's the question," the Corporal observed.

"I am only beginning, and thee shows impatience. Why, I could narrate a whole history. And to *me*, what a blessed history. I shall bear it all in mind to my dying day. Not a morning dawn, but there was the little maid hurrying up the pathway to Antioch. Dipping her nose down into the spring under the white oak for a drink. Then, all smiles and merriment, bursting through my door like a gale of wind! Both shoes untied, and the strings flying. And I must stoop down and tie them up for little madam. Ah, me! didn't my back ache many a time?"

"You bet," affirmed Corporal Girty.

"O, now!" began Florence again. "Why, Mother Madden, you—"

"Interrupting again! Won't let me go on. Just at my opening remarks, too. Not even yet down to the foot race, brother Girty."

"Spring meeting! Jockey club for two-year-olds," said he.

"I don't know how that may be," replied the other. "But I was there and saw it all. Yes, I clapped my old hands once or twice. Wasn't it wonderful?"

"Don't name it," echoed the Corporal, rubbing together his hands.

"Such a race! And my boy, with his bare arm! O, my boy! My Bon! gone! gone! my darling, darling, darling Bon! O!—"

The poor woman could not finish. She buried her face in her hands. Miss Clarke gave way to audible sobs. Corporal Girty looked round on the display of emotion, and affected to cough. It was a failure. Florence got up and went to the window.

"I've left my handkerchief at home, Molly," he said after a time of silence. "Let me have yours a moment. Here's a hair crossways in my eye."

"I perceive thee is looking out on the old romping ground, Florence," Mother Madden commenced. "I hope thee is pleased. Many pranks there, thee may remember? I stood in the door hour after hour to look on. What gambols and outcries! And what has come of it all? Here I sit down in loneliness; and few to lift my latch. Even my little lady of former days don't find me out. The grass grows in the old pathway. How long has it been, now, Florence?—how long, I ask, since thy feet have trodden the door-sill of Antioch?"

"Well, now, Mother Madden—" she began.

"Two full years, I think. But don't let it distress thee. I have had entertainment, nevertheless. It has been a joy to think of thee as thee *was*. A hundred things about me call thee to mind. Even the work of art, my Bon was so careful in preserving. If it will afford you any pleasure, friends, I will bring it out. It hangs yet in my boy's

room, as he put it up. It was his pride in other days. The work of two artists. It was wrought out on that table. Two artists, as I said, seated side by side. The one eight, the other seven. It was a wonderful performance. When finished, the two were soiled and stained from head to foot. Let me show it to you."

The old lady retired and soon came back with the picture. It was on a piece of pasteboard. A horse, (supposed at least, to be one,) and something resembling a cat; and done in pokeberry juice.

Miss Clarke, who taught drawing at her schools, was obliged to put her handkerchief to her mouth. The Corporal, to compass its whole merit, doubled up his fist, and took a telescopic survey. Florence Craft hastily fled from the house.

When the two others left, some little time after, they found her sitting at the roadside. Miss Clarke beckoned the Corporal to continue on, and she herself sat down by her young friend.

"Wasn't that too bad?" was the latter's first utterance.

"The picture?"

"That certainly was bad enough. No, I mean Mother Madden's embarrassing talk."

"Bon was very dear to her. And the news of his being drowned in crossing the river, was a severe blow."

"It was to us all. But a stranger might infer,

from her remarks, that I was somehow to blame. I'm sure the shock was as great to me as to any other person. I had almost given up all hope of ever hearing from him, and that intelligence seemed the death blow to the little I had left. How very miserable my life has been made by it."

"I can believe it, Florence. Bon was a charming fellow. I see you now with young Chaffin. You wrote me he wished to marry you. How is it?"

"It is just so, Miss Clarke. I'm sorry for it. To tell the truth, that's now my big trouble. I'm persuaded, and pleaded with, and persecuted in all manner of ways. But I can't like him. We're not congenial. Sometimes I declare, straight up and down, I'll hear no more about it. Then, of course, there's a high time. Father raves; and mother, of late, (most likely for peace's sake,) sides with him. So you see how my life is distracted. The Chaffin's have done a vast deal for us, you know. And the father of Augustus has set his heart on the measure. I really think he has a high regard for me. In my trouble I sometimes go to Aunt Deborah. But she won't say anything. And how can I blame her? Now, *you* are here, I feel that I am sure of one to counsel with."

"And what are the feelings of your heart? Is there anything in it tending towards love?"

"Love for this man? No. My heart rejects him. I am being sought as a subject for sacrifice. I often think I am to be in the place of compensation for farm rent. To be taken instead of money. Probably a receipt in full will be given the day of the wedding. Isn't it degrading? I'm glad, in my very soul, there's somebody I can say that to at last. Yes, degrading!"

"Then, what do you expect to do, my dear friend?"

"Ah! I wish I knew that. I'm but a commodity, you see. It may turn out I'm not of equal value with the rent at last. In that case, I shall be rich in my own estimation. If I could run away, and be sure of my bread, I would do it this hour. But how could I steer my bark alone in this bad world? So I stay and endure the torture.

"Bon Madden had all the heart I ever possessed. Dead though he is, it is his still. I would rather have put myself in his arms, and lived on husks, than be bride at a king's table. But that dreadful matter in Court crossed our path. Miss Clarke, let me tell you, I would give all the riches buried in the earth if I could recall that blow I gave him at our last meeting. I didn't answer his appeal. No, I didn't speak to him. Not speak to Bon! He whose love I had had always. My husband, some day, as we had agreed, and bound

the tie with mutual embraces. Yes, a thousand times. And like a heartless savage, I let him go without a word. O, the memory of that has been my heavy burden. And here follows this perplexity: What shall I do?"

"Now, shall I really tell you?"

"O, by all means. You can't do me a greater service."

"Well. Supposing your life to be your own; and that you are living it for yourself and not for somebody else, I think I should take my own way."

"That's my opinion, Miss Clarke. I thank you for expressing it. Yes, with my whole heart. I will act on that view of it. It confirms what I've thought all along."

"Now, let us go then," returned the other.

"There!" said Florence, rising, "I have left my handkerchief back at Mother Madden's. Wait here a moment until I go back for it."

"What do you think, Miss Clarke?" she said on returning; "it looked so strange! There was a man standing at the place where I parted with Bon Madden. I could see him plainly down amongst the trees. He stood there quite a spell. I hurried away when he started on up the path towards the house. He didn't see me watching him. Who do you think it was?"

"Who was it?"

"Mr. Gilbert, who preached at the camp ground. What can he have to do at Mother Madden's?"

The two ladies parted at Corporal Girty's gate.

"Come in, Molly," he said, as Florence passed on. "I've a word to say on this occasion."

"I shall be pleased to hear what it is," was her reply.

"It's important. Very important. I've been running it over in my mind while sitting here, and have brought the matter down to this point. Considering the certainty of life, and the uncertainty of death, (as I've somewhere read,) isn't it about time that little matter of ours should come to a head? In my view of it, we're losing a good deal of valuable time."

"You mean our proposed marriage?"

"Yes. Just now I've not much to occupy myself about, and thought we might close up the account. Not, however, if it's going to put you the least bit out o' sorts, or waste your time. Marriage, I know well, is a matter to be handled with care, as the storekeepers say. A time might come, in the rush of business, when I should forget the thing altogether. I've not the best of memories. But just now it's fresh."

"You are getting along here pretty well, I presume?"

"Tolerable. Things might be worse. Be sure, there's a new girl just now at the bellows. Does everything middling, but cooking. She takes snuff. And half of it don't get into her nose. It's not as good as pepper. Especially on a butter plate. Besides, her hair hasn't all of it been well clinched; and I shouldn't wonder if baldness didn't some day set in. Now, what time shall we fix on? Time, I've been told, should always be taken by the scalplock."

"Yes. There is a saying something to that import. As to this matter you speak of, let me say, it has also engaged my attention. Let me state my views."

"Proceed. The time is yours."

"After some months time, I shall be obliged to return to New London. I may be detained there the best part of a year. An estate matter. I have thought by the end of that period you might hear from your attorney in England, and would be obliged to go there once more. If so, wouldn't it be for us a pleasant wedding tour?"

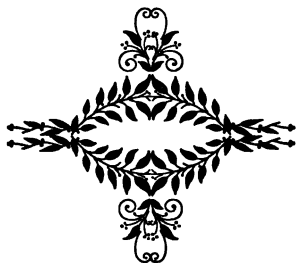
"A salt-water wedding! Molly, you're out of your head. Don't get in the way of talking at random. What has a bride to do in bilge-water and tar? If you had ever gone through the mill, as I have, you'd know something."

"A pleasant wedding tour, do you say? Deliver

me from all such landlords as sea captains. How do you think they disposed of me?"

"I can't say, surely. How was it?"

"Put me to sleep in a bunk about as wide as a plank. Another fellow, (he weighed about three hundred,) in another right over me. I looked for him to break down the whole rig, and crush me to death every hour of the voyage."



CHAPTER XVI.

"You find me hamper'd in a cruel net.
Insatiate greed, that pray'rs nor tears can curb,
Has bound me fast. In mercy's blessed name,
If power you have, unseam the hateful web."

Never had the people of that section of the Founders's County of Bucks, embraced in these annals, known an entertainment on so grand a scale as that taking place under the roof of Pixley Chaffin, two months after the camp-meeting. A very general invitation had been extended to both old and young; and the lady of the mansion exulted in witnessing the number her cards of invitation had brought within her doors. Her husband, arrayed in English aristocratic garb, distinctive from all others, moved with assumed dignity and grandeur through the apartments, cordially greeting the assembled guests. He showed marked civility to the older persons present; and joked, not in the most refined style, with the younger. The little he knew of literature, was displayed in misquotations from the English poets, delivered in poor imitation of the manner of the stage. His own achievements and pecuniary acquisitions came in for due share in his verbal demonstrations.

The dresses of Mrs. Chaffin and her daughter were objects of wonder with the less cultivated of

the assemblage. The display of jewelry was sufficient to lead into captivity the eyes of some farmers' daughters, who had never looked upon the like before. Even the costumes of the servants had attraction. Men in livery was novel.

When supper was announced the host, in his proudest style, took Mother Madden on his arm, and escorted her to the table. She was placed on his right hand; the Haley's on his left; the Craft's, Corporal Girty and Miss Clarke in the near vicinity.

It was a long table, spread in the spacious dining room, and loaded with whatsoever delicacies the city or country could supply. Illuminated with wax candles, variously colored, that shed their rays from the chandelier overhead, the room merited the admiration bestowed upon it.

As the banquet progressed, the host was exuberant. He fired off his compliments, right and left, to those far and near. Some of the young damsels were convulsed when, with a wink, he bantered them on the subjects of beaux and flirtations. The plain, he pronounced superb; the comely, angelic. Merriment and vivacity prevailed; enhanced now and then by the boisterous laughter of the genial man at the head of the table.

When midway in the feast, the host entered upon the narration of an event, happening in Yorkshire, when he was a young man and "full of

gallantry." It was something about a complicated mass of entanglement, concerning the daughter of a member of Parliament, for whose favor himself and a duke's nephew were competitors.

When in full tide, and the young ladies were listening with breathless attention, a servant entered to inform the host a man wanted to speak to him at the outer door.

"Don't interrupt me," he said in a testy humor ; "go away."

The narration was resumed. But in two minutes time the same menial returned, stating the man said he *must* come.

"Be gone," he shouted. "Haven't I told you not to interrupt me ? Be gone, I say."

The manservant went out. But hardly had the Yorkshire incident got fairly under way, when another messenger came. This time it was the steward.

"What's the matter ?" demanded the host. The steward was about to whisper something in his master's ear. "Speak out," he cried. "None here but my friends. Out with it."

"The man says if you don't come out forthwith, he'll bring you out."

"Will he ? *Who* is this mighty man ? A major-general ?"

"No, sir. The High Sheriff of the county."

"Wants me to serve as foreman of the grand jury, no doubt. Friends, excuse me a few minutes. Don't let this trifle impair your appetites. I'll send this great officer packing with a bee in his bonnet. Keep up the good cheer, friends."

The repast went on again. Soon conviviality prevailed. In the course of fifteen minutes, it was partially interrupted by the hasty entrance of a domestic, who called Mrs. Chaffin from the table. She retired with him.

Some fifteen minutes longer, the door was flung open, and in burst Chaffin. He was in a greatly disordered state, with his hand full of papers. Dropping into his seat, he indulged in a short hysterical laugh. This was followed by hastily wiping his face, and then his whole head. He rammed the papers into his pocket.

"That's right," he called out in loud accents, "enjoy yourselves, friends. I was never in so good a humor. Eat on."

He pulled the papers out of his pocket, and stared awhile at them. He shut his teeth together directly; pushed his chair away with violence, and rushed out of the room.

The guests sat in amazement. No one essayed further to touch the rich provisions on the board. Mr. Haley rose from his chair, and counselled the propriety of retiring. He was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Chaffin, who scarce had power of

articulation. But the company gathered from her incoherent words that her husband had lost his mind. But she wished her guests to finish their repast, and hastily went out.

The table was at once deserted. With decent haste the company sought out their articles of apparel and left the house. A confused uproar of loud speaking and heavy tramping assailed their ears as they went away.

By the rising of the sun next morning, Corporal Girty was summoned in haste to Mr. Chaffin's. He found him in a deplorable condition. He was in bed, with a part of his party dress still on. He had slept none during the entire night. His eyes were luminous with a wild expression, and his hair in confusion. As the Corporal entered, he sat up and reached forth his hand.

"Shake hands with me," he said. "Are you my friend?"

"Every time," answered the Corporal.

"True and firm?"

"As a rock," was the reply.

"Can I trust you? Trust you in a big matter? A matter of life and death? Answer me *that*. Can I trust you, sir?"

"For how much?"

"What, sir?"

"The amount. That's all. The storekeeper trusts me for a good deal."

"Faugh! I don't mean that. Can I trust you with a great secret? Can I put myself and all I'm worth in your hands?"

"Explain," returned the other. "Open up a little."

"I want help," replied Chaffin in a pitiful strain. "I'm a ruined man. I've nobody in this strange land to lean on. I'm hunted down by hounds. There's a conspiracy against me. A vile conspiracy. Look at that bundle of papers. Look at it. I can't any more. It puts me in a shiver. It's a mass of enormity. I tell you, it's conspiracy. The devil's at the bottom. Read, will you?"

"Several of them," said the Corporal, looking at the documents; "which shall I tackle first?"

"No difference. They're all a piece of the same rascality. Go on."

The Corporal opened the largest; cleared his throat, and looked at it a moment.

"Not in the best style of copyhand," he remarked. "I could beat this myself."

"Go on," cried Chaffin impatiently.

"I'll try it, Mr. Chaffin," was the return, and he read:

"The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

"Bucks County ss."

"What does ss. mean?" asked the reader, pausing.

"Villiany, sir. Villiany. Go on."

"To the Honorable, the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas for the County of Bucks. In Equity."

"Humbly complaining, sheweth unto your honors, you orator, Ban—"

"Stop!" shouted Chaffin. "I won't hear it. Read to yourself."

"Let me spell out this corkscrew of a name, first," returned the Corporal, boggling over the name that puzzled him. "Ban—Bin—(hard scrabbling, this,) Bonna—Benna—ville—Bonnville—that's it. Bonnville Cresson. Who's he?"

"Never mind. Go on with your reading."

The Corporal set to work in silence. The papers were of much import. They constituted a demand for all the property in Chaffin's possession. The reader's eyes opened wider and wider at the universality of the claim. The tedious accumulation of terms and phrases struck him with wonder. The document appeared to lay claim to all Chaffin's lands, tenements and hereditaments, rights and credits, goods and chattels; farms, saw mills, factories, grist mills, dwelling houses, barns, stables, sheds, farming utensils, horses, carriages, cattle, sheep and swine; all moneys, stocks, bonds, mortgages, money at interest, book accounts, &c., &c., &c. At the same time, praying that the said Chaffin might be restrained from selling or disposing of anything whatever, &c., &c.; calling

upon him to render an account of all moneys received by him, and all profits in any way derived during the last ten years, &c.

"*Who* is this chap?" the Corporal asked when through. "And what does he mean by this everlasting rigmarole?"

"No such man living," affirmed Chaffin. "It's a man of straw, got up to suck my blood. I tell you, it's all a dish of poison. There *is* no such man. It's got up to make me a beggar. All my family will be beggars. What will become of me? O, Corporal—Corporal!—" he broke down and wept. In vain the other essayed to soothe him. He ran on with exclamations of mental agony, accompanied with bursts of grief. An half hour elapsed before the paroxysm ceased. Then it was arranged that Corporal Girty should take the papers home with him; give them a thorough examination, and then repair to the county seat and retain counsel.



CHAPTER XVII.

"There was on both sides much to say."

A law suit is a mementous event in any rural district. Few things, even in this, the latter part of the present century, makes a more effectual commotion. It is a matter requiring prompt promulgation by every hearer; and the importance of the case enlarges with each transmission.

The visit of the Sheriff at Mr. Chaffin's was known to all the guests. The effect it produced on him was likewise known. Inquiries at his mansion the next morning had lent additional weight to public excitement.

Before nightfall, Cobe Stott had been seen in the neighborhood, flying from point to point, engaged about—nobody knew what. When inquired of as to the nature of his visit, he had nothing to say.

As Corporal Girty had been seen to leave Chaffin's house in the forenoon, *he* was sought out. The inquirer found him at his home, his coat off and shirt collar open, seated at a table, very busy over some papers. When he was asked what they were, he answered, *papers*. With this the questioner took his departure.

Miss Clarke, who was waited on, could offer nothing on the subject. Colin McCallom turned

a busybody out of his shop, saying he might e'en gang to the di'el wi' his spierin' an his blather. "Skelp awa', ye inqeesitive ragamuffin," were his words, "or I'll swinge yer buttock wi' a strap o' cow hide."

Cobe Stott still hovered about the day after. A posse tracked him to the tavern, where he was found eating his dinner. He ate with the air of a man weighed down with thought. Scarcely time, as it appeared, to half chew his food. When he rose from the table, one of the party drew him aside. He wished, as a particular favor, to know what had brought him from the county seat. Cobe answered, *business*. It was idle to pursue the inquiry further. What was ever gained in pumping a lawyer?

It was towards night, the second day after the banquet at Chaffin's, that Deborah Haley and Miss Clarke waited on Corporal Girty. He was still working over the problem, with the papers before him.

They had a short conference with him, productive of signal results. He sprang up, and with knitted brow, hurled the papers upon the floor.

"These pigs," said he, "have come to the wrong market." And he kicked them about the room.

"Let John Bull hunt up some other lackey," he continued. "Help him out of the mire! I?—take my head for a bucket first. This is all so, Molly?"

"The exact truth," was her reply.

"It is, Mrs. Haley?"

"Yes, Phineas," answered the lady. "It is even so."

"This trash," said the Corporal with disdain, "will do very well for kindling. I'll throw it on the wood pile."

"Friend Chaffin's papers?" asked Deborah.

"Yes. I'm half mad to see them."

"Don't injure them, Phineas. They don't belong to thee. Will it not be right for thee to return them to him?"

"That's so. I'm above an unjust thing. They shall go back."

A long and earnest conversation ensued. When over, Deborah Haley and Miss Clarke took leave, and the Corporal sat out on the unpleasant errand of returning the legal documents to their disquieted owner.

A few busy, excitable months ensued. A great trial was approaching. The people in the country roundabout could talk of little else. Some individuals in particular were astir. It seemed difficult to determine whether Corporal Girty was a resident of the county town, or that wherein he was accustomed to cast his vote. Mr. Preston, the Quaker lawyer, and as has been intimated, the patron of Cobe Stott, was frequently seen at the Haley mansion, as also at that of Corporal Girty.

Cobe came and went with the alacrity of a news-boy, both by day and night. He and the Corporal were congenial, and spent many hours together. It was not unusual to see light in the Corporal's window at very late hours. Miss Clarke often participated in the midnight sessions.

The other side presented the same aspect of activity. Mr. Chaffin had come out of the state of bewilderment, which at first had unmanned him. He lost no time in arraying himself for the conflict. Every one in his employ was placed under requisition. His son rode back and forth between the father's dwelling and office of his counsel. Peter Craft, thinking he saw breakers ahead, bestirred himself. He came and went, as the finger of his English friend pointed. Mr. Silas Hen, member of the legal profession, known for his ability and species of fearless bravado, had been retained by Chaffin, in conjunction with lawyer Grimes. They spent hours at their employer's residence.

So matters went on in a lively way. The approaching term of Court, when the opposing parties, contending for a large stake, should publicly struggle for victory in the lists, was anxiously waited for. And when at last the day came, few of the immediate inhabitants remained behind. Some went as witnesses under subpoena; many more drawn thither by wakeful curiosity.

The President Judge of the county, alleging his incapacity to sit in trial of the case, having in some collateral matter years before been concerned as counsel, declined serving. Judge Nesbitt, heretofore spoken of, accepted the call to occupy the bench in this instance. Though a proceeding in equity, there were certain issues of fact rendering the interposition of a jury necessary.

That he might not fail to be on hand in time, Corporal Girty set out the night before. Colin McCallom, closing the doors of his shop, went with him. He was disposed to excuse or palliate the apparent haste, (not being under subpoena,) saying to the Corporal on the way, that he had nae verra guid opinion o' the law, or the pauky chiels fu' o' tricks an' contraps, makin' truth a lee, an' a lee truth.

"Na, na," were his words, "an' honest mon hae muckle need to bide awa' frae the yelpin' crew; di'el tak' 'em a'. Hae ye nae seen 'em, neebor, wrinklin' up their ean, sweatin' like bullocks, spoutin' hale hours together, an' a' to mak' his honor believe the moon was naething mair than a bit o' cheese? I wad nae sooner put mysel' in their clutches than rin my han' in the happer o' the mill. Still, ye ken, neebor, wha can keep quiet when ane's own town folk hae gotten ane anither by the lug?"

CHAPTER XVIII.

“He deem’d who tied the Gordian knot,
The prince of puzzles was achieved;
What had that juggle-monger thought,
Viewing the quirks in courts conceived?”

The trial in the case of Bonnaville Cresson *vs.* Charles Pixley Chaffin commenced before a crowded Court. After a jury had been empaneled and qualified, Judge Nesbitt addressed a few words to the counsel engaged.

“Gentlemen,” said he, “I have run my eye over the bill and pleas in this case, and find it to be one of very great importance. It will be my earnest desire to reach a just conclusion. I shall not, therefore, hold you to legal exactness in introducing your evidence. I will receive testimony on behalf of either party at any time; even after counsel begin addressing the jury, or while I am delivering my charge. My purpose is to try the case entirely on its merits. I desire that all the facts shall go before the jury, without regard to the time or order of their presentation. I shall therefore allow you very great latitude, with the hope of doing strict justice to these contending parties. It may be at the expense of usual forms; but the ends of justice should, if possible, be reached. There is too much at stake, that mere technicalities should interpose an obstacle. I

hope, gentlemen, I have your concurrence in these views; and that we may all feel, at the termination of the cause, that proper laxity has aided, rather than obstructed, the course of justice and equity. You will proceed with the trial."

Mr. Preston, in exercise of professional courtesy, permitted his junior counsel, Cobe Stott, to open the case on behalf of the plaintiff. The young man, greatly to the delight of his associates in former years, acquitted himself with credit. It is true, at this point in the trial, he had only to make a brief statement of the nature of the issue, and the testimony that would be adduced on the part of his client.

The first two hours were taken up in showing the sum of Chaffin's possessions. There was a display of record testimony, not very interesting to the assembled crowd. Thirty title deeds were produced, for lands on the Delaware, on the Ne-shaminy, and points between. Mortgages and judgments, in a long array. Tabulated statements of book accounts, moneys, promissory notes, stock, machinery, &c., &c.

Then the record of the will of John Cresson, of Yorkshire, which had been probated by Chaffin, and under which he assumed to be the sole heir and legatee of the said John Cresson.

This will, by its terms, devised all the testator's property to his adopted child, *Bonnaville Cresson*;

and in case of his death before arriving at years of maturity, then to his faithful and trusted steward, Charles Pixley Chaffin. Mr. Preston announced, that on this *prima facie* showing, to wit, the amount of property involved and plaintiff as legatee, the plaintiff rested for the present. Judge Nesbitt stated to the opposing counsel, he would hear their side.

"If your Honor please," said Mr. Hen, rising with an air of assurance and triumph, "we find ourselves embarrassed in being called on to answer, where there is nothing to make answer to. We came here to meet a lawful demand—to contest a matter with a real, actual, living person. This only verifies what my client has asserted from the first, that he was confronted with a man of straw. There's a *name* on the record, but where is the *man*? Are we to answer a *dead* man? I ask of my legal friend on the other side, where is this man plaintiff?"

"In my pocket, Mr. Hen," was the calm reply of Mr. Preston."

"That's balderdash," exclaimed Hen, with a scowl.

"Not that, Mr. Hen; but a letter of attorney. I will show it to your Honor."

"If you please," returned the Judge; and the document was handed up. The Judge looked it over.

"It is all right, Mr. Preston. Your party plaintiff is in Court. If you have anything to offer on your side, Mr. Hen, proceed."

Mr. Hen remarked that he would make no formal opening, but would call some witnesses. He thought after the Court and jury had heard them, they would be puzzled to know how the dead and buried could make, and deliver to his friend on the other side, a power of attorney. May be that gentleman would find a way to explain.

Mr. Hen then called to the witness stand Nicholas Toser. He gave a statement of his sailing with John Cresson, of Yorkshire, and his steward, Mr. Chaffin, for America. That Mr. Cresson died at sea. That he had with him when he took passage, a little boy, called Bonnaville Cresson. That this boy, in a gale they encountered when near port, was swept overboard. He saw him distinctly when he was carried away by a big wave. Mr. Hen, at the close of this examination in chief, handed him to the other side for cross-examination, with a wave of his hand and significant glance at the jury.

Mr. Preston waived a cross-examination.

The counsel then called Andrew Scrimp. His testimony was to the same import. And, as in the other instance, Mr. Preston declined to cross-examine him.

Mr. Hen having remarked in a low tone, sufficiently loud for his opposing attorneys to hear, that that settled their cup of coffee, announced in louder notes, that he would rest the case.

This was important testimony; and, if the witnesses were believed, defeated the plaintiff in securing a verdict. It showed his death many years before the institution of the suit; and necessarily the right of Chaffin to take under the will.

Mr. Preston resumed. He produced a certified record, formally attested, from the State of Vermont. Judge Nesbitt examined it a moment, and then directed it to be read. The document was handed to Cobe Stott, who, in a loud, distinct voice, made known its contents to all present. We quote the essential portions of the paper. We have already narrated the circumstances under which it was made at East Highgate:

"My name is John Vanskiver. I believe I am about to die. To ease my conscience, and to make a proper confession, is my purpose in making this dying declaration."

Mr. Chaffin, who had a conspicuous seat at the trial table, here became very restive. He took up a glass of water, and made pretense of drinking. Cobe read on.

"I was born in England. I never had much learning. My boyhood was spent in bad com-

pany. I learned to swear, lie, and drink brandy. I was stable boy for a while at the races, and there learned to gamble. Then I went into the prize ring, and had my share of hard knocks. Then I engaged in the smuggling line; mostly between England and the continent. I had two partners, and we followed the business four years. My partners' names were Nicholas Toser and Andrew Scrimp."

"At this point, if your Honor please," said Mr. Preston, rising in his calm manner, "to prevent these two men avoiding justice by escaping, I desire the Court to order them placed under arrest and held in custody for trial hereafter."

"What for?" demanded Mr. Hen, with fierce expression, and jumping to his feet.

"Corrupt and wilful perjury," said Preston, sitting down.

"Infamous! infamous!" began Mr. Hen.

"Sit down, sir," were the Judge's words. "The plaintiff's request is granted. The Sheriff will take the two men into custody."

When this was accomplished, the Court directed Cobe to proceed with the reading. He did so:

"Business getting dull in England, Toser, Scrimp and I concluded we would try our chance in America. It was said a good thing could be made of it between the States and Canada. So we took

passage. I soon became acquainted with Mr. Chaffin, and we had long talks together. Colonel Gardiner, with a British regiment, was aboard.

"When part way over, Mr. Chaffin came to me one day, and said he wanted help in a little job. There was money in it, he said, and thought I was his man. I agreed with him. He said he liked my looks and business ways of looking at matters, and he would see that I shouldn't lose anything. He said his master, Mr. Cresson, had made a will, and if it stood, all that he had could be made to fall into our hands. But Cresson was making at that moment a second will, that would cut him out. As all Cresson's matters were left in his hands, this new will would be also. He would put the last will in my hands to destroy. He could then prove *he* hadn't destroyed, but had handed it to me a moment, and it had been accidentally blown overboard by a sudden whiff of wind. He himself would keep the first will, which, by Mr. Cresson's orders, he was to destroy. I kept that second will, without Chaffin's knowing it, until several years after.

"Then came up the trouble about Cresson's boy. We had to get him out of the way, or he would come in first best in the first will. We made up a drowning scheme. I told him, for a reasonable compensation, he could get my two partners, Toser and Scrimp, to swear they saw the lad drowned.

I told him it would be well to keep track of them, in case they were wanted some day. A big gale took place before we landed, and several were washed overboard. We thought here was our chance. We hid the little fellow in the hold, and gave out he went over with the others. At the wharf, on landing, we smuggled him on shore by night, and I took a long journey with him into the country. I fell in with a man, driving an ox team to his covered wagon, loaded with his household goods, going out West. He wanted a boy, and I let him have mine."

During the reading of this statement, Mr. Hen had a very restless client sitting at his side. All his whispers and nudging failed to keep him under control. His excitement was none the less, perceiving the gaze of the whole audience resting on him.

Mr. Preston next called to the stand, as witness, Corporal Girty. He gave a detailed history of finding a boy in a hollow log at his deerlick. Of finding a place for him at Mother Madden's. That after her, the boy had been called *Madden*. Bon Madden. The first part, *Bon*, was derived from the boy himself.

Here Judge Nesbitt stopped the witness.

"One moment, Mr. Girty," he said. "I don't want to interrupt the testimony; but that name?

Bon Madden! It seems to me it has a familiar sound. Have I ever heard it before?"

"Be sure you have," returned the Corporal. "And saw the lad also. You had the honor of passing sentence on him for stealing Peter Craft's money. Money, sir, afterwards found in Peter's pocket. I hope this time he'll fare better at your hands."

"That will depend on all the evidence, Mr. Girty. Still, I am glad to learn the young man's innocence was established. He interested me very much at the trial. Proceed, sir."

When the Corporal's detail was completed, he was turned over to Mr. Hen for cross-examination. This gentleman braced himself up, put on a savage expression of features, and with prolonged drawl on each word, demanded:

"Mr. Corporal Girty, where—was—you—born?"

"Ah! *that's* a question, Mr. Hen. It's never been settled. Since the old folks died, we've had it up a hundred times. Some contend I was born in the little room over the entry. Others—"

The witness was interrupted by the uproar. Judge, jury, and all but Hen and his client joined in it.

"Well, sir," continued Mr. Hen, when peace and quiet was restored, "let me know this. You have taken much credit to yourself for extricating the

boy you found; now, be pleased to let the Court and this jury know in what manner you extricated him."

"Extricated! extricated! O, yes, I understand. Well, sir, the first grab I made was for his shirt tail. This being likely to give way, I fastened on his hind leg, and—"

This development was worse than the other. Mr. Hen looked round on the tittering throng, with daggers in the glance. He stood up, and bending towards the witness, in a loud and threatening tone, demanded:

"Tell me this, sir. And remember you're under oath. I want no dodging. Answer, and give us the truth at your peril, sir; have you, or have you not, taken an active part in getting up and prosecuting this case? Answer that."

"That I'm glad you've asked," said the witness. "I can show you now the difference between an honest man and a lawyer. Active part? I rolled up my sleeves and went into it day and night. I've done more in the case than any other five you can pick out. It was my boy I was working for. Yes, sir, my Bon. The fastest racer; the best surveyor; the noblest hearted and biggest souled of all the race of Adam. Ask Judge Nesbitt about him. Yes, the Judge sitting in this trial, got him a pardon—God bless him for the act. Taken an active part! Why do you ask such a

fool question as that? Of course, I did. I'd go through a sea of fire for my Bon. He's all the boy I ever had. I worshipped him. He had me, soul and body, always. That's what an honest man is. Now, on the other hand, I'll tell you the difference between him and the lawyer."

Mr. Hen called on the Court for protection against insult. The Court intimated that the counsel had provoked the remarks; and if he had no further questions for the witness, another might be called. Mr. Hen had no other, and the Corporal descended from the stand, the most popular of men.

Mr. Preston announced that he had nothing further to offer, and must rest the case where it stood. Mr. Hen took his position before the jury and began his address in confident tones. He argued that nothing had been shown, to satisfy either Court or jury, that the boy named in the will of John Cresson was the individual instituting the proceeding. A Bon Madden, lately convicted of theft, had been paraded before them as the party. "Is Bon Madden and Bonnaville Cresson one and the same? Where is the proof of it? I believe, gentlemen," were his words, "no such person as Bonnaville Cresson breathes the breath of life. Mr. Chaffin came into Court like a man. He's not ashamed to show his face. But where is this skulking plaintiff? The other side fail to call

him. Let me do them the favor. Bonnaville Cresson!" he shouted at the top of his lungs.

"Here!" came from a person back in the crowd.

"Come forward," cried Mr. Preston.

The young gentleman, with glasses on, came to the bar.

"Fraud! deception! conspiracy!" yelled Mr. Hen. "*This* your party—your lost heir—your Bonnaville Cresson! Why, this is only Gilbert, the preacher! Didn't I hear him preach at the camp-meeting some few months ago?"

"On bones," Corporal Girty added.

"Silence!" called out the officers in the room.

"If the Court please," said Mr. Hen, "we want no more jugglery or sleight of hand. We have now three plaintiffs in place of one. Which one of the three will the counsel adopt?"

"Go on to the jury, sir," commanded the Judge.

Mr. Hen did so. He was now certain of his case. In hot words he denounced the imposition last attempted. He rose in eloquence as he proceeded. He came on to speak of the voyage of the testator, and the fatality of some of those taking passage in the vessel. "Fatal voyage!" he said. "Fatal to some now food for fishes. Fatal to the capitalist who was not unmindful of his 'faithful steward,' now sitting at this table. Fatal in that gale to the boy, Bonnaville Cresson; swept to his last sleep in the ocean's bosom."

"Not so, sir," came from a voice in the audience.
"Not so, sir."

"Who are you?" demanded the advocate.

"Colonel Gardiner, at your service. My regiment was on that vessel. The boy was *not* drowned."

"Come before the Court, Colonel Gardiner," said the Judge. "I didn't know I had a friend and neighbor here."

"We will examine the Colonel," said Mr. Preston.

The former was accordingly sworn. He stated his knowledge of John Cresson. He had been a resident in the same town with him. He knew of the gale. Four of his regiment were lost. He knew Mr. Chaffin before he left England—saw him on the vessel—saw him and a short, stout man go upon the wharf, the little boy with them. The boy he remembered well. A grand little fellow, three or four years old. He was a great favorite with the sailors. They used to recite some poetry of their composition, when the child, in nothing but a shirt, appeared amongst them. It was warm weather. His name in full was on the hind part of the shirt, in very plain letters. This was their rhyme:

"Here comes Bonnaville Cresson,
With very short dress on,
He's a rollicking craft
With his name painted aft."

The Colonel remembered this garment very well. Under the first name was the word *No.*, indicating the term, number; and under the last name, the corresponding figures.

There was nothing conclusive in this testimony, and Mr. Hen was about to resume his speech, when Mr. Preston interrupted him. A slip of paper had been put into Preston's hand, which he exhibited to the Court. It was about the hour of adjourning over to the next morning, and the Judge directed the crier to adjourn the Court to that time.

The slip of paper had on it, "Send for Bon's treasure box." It had no name.

Mr. Preston and Cobe Stott hurried to their office for consultation. Their case looked gloomy. They had proof of the sum of property. Proof that the boy, Bonnaville Cresson, was not, as the other party contended, drowned in the gale. They had now Bon Madden present in his proper person. But how were they to establish the important fact, that the boy seen by Colonel Gardiner taken off the vessel at the wharf, was the same person who had responded to Mr. Hen's call. That individual answering to the name of Bonnaville Cresson, was known to all in Court as Bon Madden, and went at the camp-meeting by the name of Gilbert. They seemed going deeper and deeper into a slough. Three names for one person.

They took a hasty supper, and resumed their consultation. The Corporal and Bon had been summoned, and were present. A long interview succeeded. Nothing came of it. There seemed but one thing to do. They were driven to the necessity of going into Court next morning and withdrawing the suit. Mr. Hen had the case beyond all doubt.

It was a late hour when the dispirited counselors went to bed.



CHAPTER XIX.

"The art of our necessities is strange,
That can make vile things precious."

There was a scene at the Court house door immediately after the adjournment. The Corporal stood there, holding fast his boy, who was anxious to get away. One after another, coming from the Court room, greeted the young man with hearty shake of the hand. A great number from his old neighborhood were there. Kind indeed were the salutations he received. Pixley Chaffin was in the presence ere he was aware of it. As he cast a glance at the youth, it looked as if he was about to offer his hand. He moved on without doing it. More embarrassing still was it, when Florence Craft and her mother came out. The latter at once went up to Bon and spoke with him. Florence stood still. She was in a state of confusion. Bon at once dispelled it by advancing and giving her a courteous salutation. With her heart beating and a flush on her face, she passed on. Last to come out was Judge Nesbitt. Recognizing our young friend, he raised his hat with courteous ceremony, made his bow, and passed on. It would not answer, under circumstances, for him to do more. No doubt he longed for the utterance of a few words.

Bon walked off towards his hotel quarters, with

the Corporal on one side and Colin McCallom on the other.

"Ye na doot ken weel o' that day in lang syne," the Scotchman remarked to Bon, "that we walkit this way afore; hech! Meester Madden, or Cresson, as ye may choose to be ca'd?"

"I suppose, Mr. McCallom, that will depend on the verdict of the jury. For the present, I am Bon Madden again. Yes, I remember that day very distinctly."

"A waefu' time wi' us a', sir. An' ye maist like bear in min' what I said to ye?"

"What was it, Mr. McCallom?"

"That the crooked wad be made straight, an' a' the rough places smooth. That was it, laddie. An' ye ken how it has came to pass? An' I wad hope ye wad na grieve at the bluster now ganging on. Na, na. The sun is risin' this hour that will mak' a' things bright. It's but a wee smoke o' pouter aboon our heads, my bairn. Ne'er mind what the auld loon ca'd Hen can accomplish, wi' a' his scratchin' an' his blether. The hale truth will turn up afore lang, an' ye'll find yoursel' maister o' the roost. I'd give mair for the guid sense o' the man Preston, an' the mither wit o' Cobe Stoot, ony day. Wait till the morn, I tell ye, an' we'll see the hale gang o' villains routed, horse an' fute. Is it na true, neebor Girty?"

"My word for it, Colin. The Judge has a level head. And our lawyers will show Chaffin on which side his bread is buttered. Here we are at the hotel."

The Court was opened again next morning. Mr. Preston entered with a small wooden box under his arm, which he placed on the table. Mr. Hen and his associate looked at it with curiosity. It had been sent for the night before.

When the jury list had been called over, and all things ready, Mr. Preston arose and addressed the Court.

"I am about to do an act, your Honor, unusual in my long course of practice in the trial of cases. I propose to make an offer of testimony, without knowing what it is. It may result in injury to my client, or it may not. I crave leave to put in evidence this box and its contents. I am not fully apprised of what the box may contain. It has been intimated there's something that will avail us in bringing the case to a final and just conclusion. I ask leave of your Honor, that here in your view, and that of the jury, this box be opened."

On leave of the Court, Corporal Girty, with the aid of a hatchet, pried up the lid. Mr. Hen, clapping a handkerchief to his nose, pushed back his chair hastily, as the dirty remnant of Bon's little shirt was drawn forth.

"Contamination, corruption, and putrefaction!" shouted Mr. Hen, "are we to be poisoned by the contents of a rag-bag? For Heaven's sake, your Honor, order this Pandora's box and its filthy tatters burned to cinders. Contagion and pestilence will break out, and spread abroad over the whole country."

Mr. Preston quietly remarking that probably some kind lady present would loan his friend a smelling bottle, informed his Honor, that before inspection of the garment on the table, he would call Corporal Girty again to the witness stand.

This was done. The witness stated when and where he found the garment—that he had taken it from the boy's back—placed it in the box, where it had remained, without being molested, from that day.

Mother Madden was then called, and stated the box had been all that time in her house, and the lid had not been raised. She presumed the gold coin, presented by General Washington to the little boy, was still in the box. She put her hand in, took out the piece of gold, and held it up in view of the Court and jury.

Mr. Preston then took the shirt in hand, holding it up at arms length, and turning it this way and that. It appeared from inspection, that a piece from the back part of the garment was

missing. But plainly visible were the word and figure, at the side of the rent, thus :

BONNAVILLE
No.

After the inspection of the fragment of a garment came an awkward and embarrassing pause. The counsel of the plaintiff seemed to have reached the end of their case. Nor was it a satisfactory termination. The contents of the treasure box had done something; but not enough. They had but the half of the name. Mr. Preston and Cobe Stott whispered a spell apart. Mr. Hen regarded them with a glance of mock commiseration. He cast a shot or two of triumph from his eye in the direction of the jury. Pulled out his watch and looked at it in face of the Court, as if to remind his honor that valuable time was being wasted. Finally the Court asked Preston if he had anything further to offer. This gentleman arose to say, that after every effort they had been enabled to make, he was obliged to say they must rest their case. A fatal link was wanting, and they could not supply it. He was constrained to say, he could go no further. When he sat down, the Court turned to Mr. Hen. This gentleman was on his feet readily, to ask for a verdict. Before he could speak, there were two causes of inter-

ruption. A juror said he was suddenly sick and must retire from the room. The Judge directed him to do so.

The other interruption was caused by Corporal Girty. A sudden thought struck him, and he nearly upset the trial table by an involuntary spring. He put his mouth to the ear of Mr. Preston, but was too much excited to whisper a word. He was shaking like a leaf. Mr. Preston and Cobe retired with him to an adjoining room. Two minutes after, the Corporal was seen running at full speed towards his hotel. Ten minutes more, and whip in hand, he was seen driving out of town.

When the counsel returned, it was to learn that the sick juror had not come back. The Court sent an officer to inquire after him. The officer returned with information that the juror was in bed. A physician was directed to examine into his condition. He did so; reporting the fact that the juror would be able to reoccupy his seat during the afternoon. The Court accordingly adjourned to that time.

With the reassembling of the parties in the afternoon came Corporal Girty. He entered with something like a bale of dry goods under his arm. He laid the bundle on the trial table with a satisfied air. Mr. Hen looked at it with suspicion. He moved back his chair a trifle.

"If you're going to make up a bed," he remarked to the Corporal, "you'd better take your duds into one of the upper rooms."

"You'll not find us asleep for a while, Mr. Hen," was his reply.

Mr. Preston arose, and pointing to the bundle in question, informed the Court that before offering the *silent* witness, he would call a *living* one. He directed the clerk to call Jemima Lomison. The name was shouted by the officer.

"Nan!" was the response.

"Come before the Court," cried the other.

"Jist as good seat here. I'm comfortable, thankee."

"You are wanted here as a witness, madam," said the Judge.

"Yes, Jedge. I'll come for *you*," and she hobbled forward.

"And how'd e do, Jedge?" she inquired. "All well to hum?"

"Very well, Mrs. Lomison."

"Mrs. Lomison, do you swear?" demanded the clerk.

"Swear! For shame!"

"Take the book," said the other.

"Must I, Jedge?"

"Unless you affirm, Mrs. Lomison," he replied.

"All right, Jedge. I don't know your ways in a Court."

When the oath had been administered, Mr. Preston took the witness in hand.

"Mrs. Lomison, what is this lying on the table?"

"That there? What's the need to ax? Can't anybody see it's a bed quilt?"

"I think there's no doubt of it, Mrs. Lomison. To whom does it belong?"

"Why, it's my quilt, if you must know."

"Did you make it yourself?"

"Be sure I did. Every stitch. What odds does it make? I say, Jedge, must I tell him everything?"

"Answer his questions, Mrs. Lomison. I will see no advantage is taken of you."

"Now, there's a particular part of it I wish you to point out," said Mr. Preston.

"That little rag Corporal Girty had with the child?"

"That identical piece, Mrs. Lomison."

The string was cut that held the bundle together. The old lady unfolded the quilt, and pointed to a piece near one corner.

"That's it," she said. "It's not worth all this ado. It's only a little mite of a rag."

"Now, Mrs. Lomison, please state in what manner it came into your hands."

"Must I, Judge?"

"Yes. Tell all about it, Mrs. Lomison."

"Well; I sot on my door-step and Corporal Girty comes along with the child on his shoulder. The Corporal was all in a sweat carryin' the young one, kase he wouldn't walk; and the little imp was kickin' and scratchin' like wild. I don't allow he had seen water in a month; and his hair was full of burs and cockle.

"Well; to rest a bit, the Corporal took the cantankerous little creeter from his shoulder, and telled me all about how he had ketched him, and where he—"

"Stop!" shouted Hen.

"Stop? what for?" asked the witness.

"Stop, I tell you."

"How can I stop and tell it, too? Can I, Judge?"

"What the Corporal said to you is not evidence," returned the Judge.

"Well; he didn't say much. He was nigh on tuckered out luggin' the young one on his back. So when he moved on agin, I picked up that rag where he had been settin', and in a few days put it in the quilt. And there it's been ever since."

"Who was the child he was carrying?"

"Why, little Bon Madden, sir. Don't we all know that?"

The witness was turned over to the other side for cross-examination. Mr. Hen went at the old woman in fierce style. He put on his most savage look, hoping to intimidate the humble witness, and make her equivocate. She bore the infliction for a while, but finally turned on her inquisitor.

"You needn't pucker up your brow at *me*," she said. "I'm not afeared. I know you. Yes, I knowed your mother afore I knowed you. She cum every year to make my soap. Keep your big eyes to yourself. I know you well enough."

"You know *me*?" demanded Mr. Hen.

"Yes."

"Where did you ever see me before, in all your life?"

"Where? Must I tell him, Jedge?"

"Yes, Mrs. Lomison."

"Well; you know well enough where I seed you. Didn't you cum to our apple-cut? And a bit drunk, too. And didn't you dance a jig with my Jane Ann?"

"What?"

"Hold on. The Jedge says I must tell. Yes, you danced with her till midnight; you can't deny it. You cum with a bottle of applejack in your pocket. And you set up with my Jane Ann, in the back kitchen, till daylight. Poor gal, she couldn't git it out of her head for months and months."

"It's all a base lie!" shouted Hen. But his denial was not heard in the loud din of laughter. "It's an infamous lie."

"You may call it what you please. But you know it's not a lie. But I could tell wus of you than all that."

"*What* can you tell?"

"Why, you stole my bee tree."

"How's that? you old Jezebel."

"You *did*. You stole all my honey. And I won't be called names by you, nuther, Mr. Wollabacker."

"Mr. *who*?"

"Your own self. Ain't you lawyer Wollabacker, of Bungtown?"

Mr. Hen sat down and heartily joined in the merriment.

The piece was now ripped from the quilt. Cobe Stott spread out the garment taken from the treasure box. He applied the piece from the quilt. The two parts fitted precisely. It read:

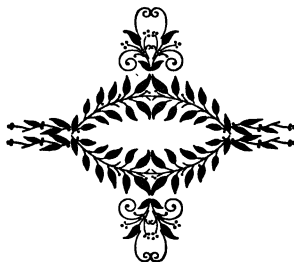
BONNAVILLE } CRESSON.
No. 7.

The Judge looked at it. The jury arose from their seats and took a survey. Nodding their heads with an air of full conviction, they retook them.

No speeches of counsel were offered. No charge was desired from the Court. The case of Cresson *vs.* Chaffin was at an end. The Judge informed the jury they might retire to their room or put their heads together in the box. They chose the latter course. As they whispered together a moment, Cobe Stott ran his fingers through his luxuriant locks. Mr. Preston, with usual deliberation, took a pinch of snuff.

As the foreman of the jury stood up and announced, "Verdict for the plaintiff," Mr. Chaffin fled from the room. He was seen immediately afterward, afoot and alone, to leave the town.

As the plaintiff had told Colin McCallom the night before, the action of the jury had determined a grave question for him. Henceforth he was BONNAVILLE CRESSON; with a large estate placed in his hands.



CHAPTER XX.

"I am a man more sinned against than sinning."

It was six days after the trial when a letter from the absent Chaffin was put into Bonnaville's hand. He found it to be from the absentee, and read it with emotion. Finishing the perusal, he showed it to Corporal Girty, who happened at the time to be at Mother Madden's, and to the old lady herself. He then requested the Corporal to go immediately to Mrs. Chaffin and ask for the loan, for a few days, of her carriage and coachman. An hour or two had not elapsed, before the Corporal and himself were on their way to a town in the County of Lancaster, whence the letter had come.

"Can you let a ruined man and an outcast address you?" the letter began. "Will you at sight of my name, my now loathed name, cast my letter unread into the fire? Or will you do a poor fugitive the favor to read a few lines, that have been wrung from his heart? It is my last request. Read my letter, and then allow my name to die out of memory.

"You didn't know it, and the Court and jury didn't, but in some things that fiend Vanskiver lied. I didn't *tempt* him. He tempted *me*; and has been my ruin. He got into my confidence on board ship. I had never known him before. I

was foolish enough one day to boast of my position in John Cresson's employ, and the high regard he had for me. That he had even made me second in his will; and I showed him Mr. Cresson's will.

"Only a few days after, Mr. Cresson made another will, and left me out entirely. In my disappointment, I showed this to Vanskiver. He laughed at me, and called me a blockhead. He said he could fix that matter in one minute. I had only to keep the old will and throw the other overboard. He snatched the last will from my hand, ran to the side of the vessel, and before I could prevent him, threw it over. There was a high sea running just then.

"I have said above that he threw the last will into the ocean. I thought then he had. But two years after, I had a suspicion he kept it. Kept it as a rod over my back. Or a rope round my neck. And good use he made of it.

"After the will was destroyed, as I thought, the next question was, what should be done with the boy. He stood between me and the heirship. Vanskiver told me that was a matter of easiness. The child was concealed, as he stated in his affidavit, and smuggled off ship at night. Taken by him secretly into the country, and I supposed put off on the man moving West.

"After that, I had no peace. I would have given

worlds to have you back. Before a month's time, I was on the track of that settler's ox team. I traced him step by step to the Ohio. There I found him at last. But my long journey came to naught. He said the boy had slipped away from him one night after he crossed the Delaware river. That was all he could say.

"O, Bonnaville! my ways have been crooked. When I once got in the mire, I found it deeper and deeper every plunge. And then, to add to the reproaches of conscience, came the frequent demands for money, that sponging villain made upon me. And to cap it all, stabbed me with a lie, in his last breath. So much for putting myself in the power of a gambler, a drunkard, and perjurer.

"In my disgrace and wretchedness, I feel that I may call upon you for one gift. If you bestow it, it will afford me more satisfaction than all the riches I once coveted. It is the gift of your forgiveness. I *do* beg and pray for pardon. I was once an honest man. Your foster father so regarded me. He called me his 'faithful steward' in his will. You can lend me some peace to my broken spirit by saying you forgive me.

"My poor wife and children! But I add no more. In sore affliction,

"Your most humble servant,
"CHAS. PIXLEY CHAFFIN."

When, a few days after the receipt of the letter, the wretched man was brought back by Bonnaville, the latter had the happiness of putting him in a mansion once considered his own. The wife, distracted and for weeks worn out with anxiety, received her husband with emotion forbidding words. She could only express herself in a flood of tears.

When at length Mr. Chaffin, the greeting over, inquired of Bonnaville whether he might remain a few days in his former home, he was speedily answered:

"Certainly, Mr. Chaffin," he replied, "most certainly. Live here just as before. The house and everything is at your command. When fully rested, and in usual condition again, I will see you. Content yourself, and live here as before."

Chaffin's return home, and the circumstance that Bonnaville had brought him back, renewed the excitement of the community, and set on foot the old discussion on the porch of the store-keeper, Mr. Worthington. A crowd was on hand, eager to talk and ready to listen.

"It beats me hollow," said Allen, the shoemaker, "when I run the thread from end to end. It's a history that ought to be printed and bound in leather. Beginnin' with that foot race. Was sich a thing ever thought of? I can't git it through my wool, how sich a young skipjack should have

so much wax in his heels. Who'd a thought it? On'y one shirt sleeve, gentlemen, but an eye sharp as an awl. Yes, Mr. Worthington, it's onaccountable. There was my Ephe, leathery as a cat, and had the inside track nearly all the way round, on'y a stitch or two more to put in, and lost by a neck! Dang it! it raises my bristles every time I think of it. And now, to think how that ragged banty has been going up! Risin', risin'; on one heeltap arter another, till he takes the starch out of us all. Jist look at it! By Jupiter, if he hasn't stepped into Chaffin's boots!"

"Jist so," said Skillet, the tinsmith. "It's amazin'. It took me weeks to git over that race. I didn't dream the brat had sich metal in his shanks. I'd a waghered all the tools in my shop on my boy, Hank. Why, gentlemen, that boy of mine could jump a three-rail fence backwards. And run! don't name it. I telled my wife there on the ground, she needn't send for the tailor, with his measurin' straps and whatnots, there was a suit on hand ready-made. I tell you, it tipped over my pewter pot, when widow Madden's colt came in ahead."

"Well," said the shoemaker, "'tween you and me, Mr. Skillet, I don't reckon there was much in your Hank to boast of."

"How's that, sir?" demanded the other.

"Don't bristle up, neighbor. Keep yourself cool

a bit. No, no; my Ephe hadn't *Hank* to fear. Not a waxend, sir. It was that dratted cub from Antioch, on his spring-heels. But let's stop a bit. Mr. Craft has opened on the trial."

The subject of the famous trial was by no means threadbare. Peter Craft, especially, had made it the theme of remark in all circles. He was now on the subject, full of ire.

The verdict had been a hard blow for Peter. He returned from the trial as much depressed and disappointed as if it had been his own cause. He had an interest in it; as he saw in its loss that of his daily bread. Was it to be wondered at that he returned in bad humor? He denounced both Judge and jury. He blamed Chaffin's attorneys for losing the case, and the plaintiff's for gaining it. He counseled Mrs. Chaffin to strip the house of furniture, and make way with it, for the benefit of herself and family. To dispose of the loose property and pocket the proceeds. This proposition met the hearty concurrence of Augustus; but the wife and daughter said *no*. He was now, as intimated, at Worthington's, on the old subject.

"Say what you will about it," he was remarking, "the jury were a set of asses, and the Judge no better."

"Heich, mon!" interposed Colin McCallom; "what do ye ken about sic matters? Ye e'en talk like a tea pot. Little will ye mak' for your-

sel' by sic fool blather. Asses! I'm ower full o' the belief, Peter, they're a' mickle better than the the mon who can rin them down."

"I think Mr. McCallom is in the right of it," the storekeeper remarked.

"Mr. McCallom never missed the mark," said another.

"I don't care a fig what you all say," Peter continued. "If I had my way, I'd send old Preston to the poor house, to feed on crumbs."

"Tak' guid care ye na get there afore him, Peter."

This raised a laugh, which Peter answered with a disdainful pucker of his lips.

"An' it's nae for Peter Craft, or any mon," continued Colin, "to speak ill o' Mr. Preston. He's unco guid at the law, as we a' hae lately seen. The auld gentleman an' Cobe Stoott mak' a cannie pair, I humble conceive. Hae ye na remembrance o' the way they trippit up yont Mr. Hen? It did me a warl o' guid to see the auld rooster's feathers rumbled. He's nae the bird to meet Mr. Preston or Cobe Stoott in the pit."

"It's very likely, I dare say," Peter returned, "you'd be pleased to see me and my family turned out of doors. That's what the law is about to do."

"The law, mark you, Mr. Craft; the law ne'er does wrang. The law, as ye may hae heard, has

nae een. Justice, as the bukes tell us, is blind. An' what right hae ye to grumph and growl if ye are o' the wrang side? Ye must put the matter in your pocket, Peter, an' haud your tongue. I wad na grat ower spilt milk. An' I say so for your ain guid."

"I don't thank you," was the return. "I say the whole thing was a farce. And Corporal Girty was the clown."

"Corporal Girty! I'll nae listen to a word anent Corporal Girty. It wad tak' muckle mair than the pratin' o' Peter Craft to put him out o' my bukes. Ye will a' find Colin McCallom the frien' o' the Corporal. He's a mon wi' a back bane, an' stan's up for the right. Ye only let yousel' doon in the scale, Peter Craft, when ye skelp at my frien' the Corporal. Tak' my advice, an' na mair alloo yer splatterin' tongue to assail so guid a mon. An' so I lea'e ye, Mr. Craft, to mak' the maist o' a' I've said for your benefit."



CHAPTER XXI.

"But here's a parchment, with the seal of Cæsar;
I found it in his closet—'tis his will."

Subsequently to the trial, Bonnaville had been so much occupied with the new burden of business cares cast upon him as to have little time for social courtesy. He had been but once to visit the Haley's. It was his intention to call at Craft's, but his sudden journey to Lancaster had interfered. The day after his return, he set out to accomplish that purpose. But in sight of the mansion he found himself forestalled. He witnessed, with considerable vexation, the entrance of Augustus Chaffin. The Craft's therefore missed the favor of the visit.

He would have renewed the effort the day following, but in some way learned that Augustus and Florence had gone to a neighboring town. Whether on business or pleasure, he did not understand.

It was on this last day, Miss Clarke called at Antioch. Through the half open door of Bonnaville's room, she perceived him sitting with something in his hands. He at once arose and came out.

"You may look at these, Miss Clarke," he said, with gravity of face; and placed a small box on the table before her.

She took out the articles one after another. Some faded flowers—a small volume of poems—half a dozen short notes, in a school girl's hand, inartificially folded—and last, a curl of silky hair, tied with a blue ribbon.

"Well," was her utterance, looking up, after the survey.

"Do they not speak for themselves?"

"Bonnaville," returned the other, "I'm sorry you have displayed them to my sight. They *do* speak. They give me pain."

"I reciprocate. Do they speak of something *dead*?"

"No."

"How can it be else?"

"Not dead, Bonnaville. I know it."

"My knowledge points to the adverse conclusion. And in your language, I think I, too, can say, *I know*. In another minute, had you not come in, these chronicles of happier days would have been turned to fuel."

"Don't burn them, my friend. I don't think it just. For I can't coincide with you in your convictions."

"Can you tell me why I should preserve them longer?"

"I think I could. I have, however, no authority to speak."

"Commit no breach of confidence for *my* sake.

I am far from asking it. Let us bid adieu to the subject. I will not, at your suggestion, commit these memorials to the flames."

"That's right. I hope you may ever stand by that resolve."

Waving the subject, they sat down. Mother Madden came in and joined them. Amongst other matters of conversation, Jack Vanskiver came in for a share. His strange doings in their neighborhood. In addition, Bonnaville related his last exploits in Vermont. Mentioned, incidentally, that the vagrant put in his hands a leathern belt or girdle, he wore round his body.

"What did thee find in it?" asked Mother Madden.

"Indeed, nothing. I have never had the curiosity to open it."

"Women, it is said, have more curiosity than men," Miss Clarke observed. "Suppose you do so now?"

"So I will." And he stepped into his room after it.

"I doubt if its contents will compensate our trouble," he said, laying the belt on the table on his return.

When the girdle was opened, nothing was disclosed but a folded paper. Bonnaville removed a wrapping, and a written document appeared. He

looked at the endorsement it bore. A flush of surprise spread over his features. He handed the instrument of writing to Miss Clarke.

"Read," he said. She read the endorsement aloud:

"LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF JOHN"
"CRESSON."

"Why," said the reader, pausing, "we heard Mr. Cresson's will read at the trial. What does this mean?"

"A man may make more than one will," returned Bonnaville. "Mr. Cresson may have done so. Open it and read the contents. No doubt it will explain itself."

The instrument was as follows:

"Whereas, I, John Cresson, late of Yorkshire, England, made and executed a former will, now in the hands of my trusted steward, Charles Pixley Chaffin, (and which I have this day instructed him to destroy,) which will was manifestly unjust, I now make and execute this second will, revoking the former one. In that, I gave all my estate to the little boy, Bonnaville Cresson, son of a far off relative, and whom I had taken into my family; and in case he died in his minority, then to my steward, the said Chaffin. In this, I cut off absolutely, my two sisters, Deborah, the wife of Reuben Haley, and Julia, wife of Peter Craft.

"Now, on my death bed, upon the mighty deep, whose billows will soon roll over me, I feel all bitterness gone from my heart, and will prove to them I have yet the feelings of a brother.

"I therefore dispose of my estate as follows: I give and bequeath to my adopted son, Bonnaville Cresson, the one-half part; to my sister, Deborah Haley, the one-fourth, and the remaining fourth to my sister, Julia Craft. Should my adopted boy die under age and without issue, his half part to go to my said sisters, share and share alike. And I appoint Reuben Haley my executor."

"On with your bonnets," said Bonnaville, when the reader had reached the end, and the two women were interchanging excited glances. "On with your bonnets at once."

"What does thee mean?" asked Mother Madden.

"We must go straight to Aunt Deborah," said Bonnaville.

"It will be taking her bad news, since the law has passed upon a will giving all to thee," said the old lady. "She will hardly thank thee for coming. Would it not be better she never knew of this kindness her brother intended her?"

"Mother," returned the young man, "it is plain to see that thee is not a lawyer. Otherwise thee would have known that a second, or last will, overrides all former ones. This paper here before

us is the proper will of John Cresson, and it shall be so regarded. What was done in relation to the other is naught. Put on your bonnets, and we'll go down to Aunt Deborah's."

"Mother Madden," said her friend, as they retired within another apartment to put on their bonnets and shawls, "I'm not ashamed now for climbing to the top rail of the fence, and cheering on our little racer as I did that day. He seems now to have more pleasure in casting the half upon others, than lately in obtaining the whole. Wasn't it a lucky day that brought to your door the up-right and the Christian, in shape of the destitute?"

"Truly, I am receiving my reward," was the response.

The callers found that Reuben Haley was from home, and would be absent several days. The wife received the unexpected intelligence with grateful emotion. The legacy was less appreciated than the assurance of a brother's dying love. She had parted from him in her native land with a cloud on his brow and icy coldness in his heart. That he had overlooked the groundless cause of offense, and recognized once more the ties of blood, was more to her than gold and silver. Still she was not insensible of the pecuniary favor, and in warm accents of commendation repaid the young man for his promptness in setting matters upon the footing of the last will.

Soon after Bonnaville's return to Antioch, Chaffin came. He was received with courtesy by the former. They retired to a room by themselves. Here Mr. Chaffin put into the other's hands a schedule of all the money, obligations and personal effects in his possession. The items formed a very long list indeed. To this was added a large number of keys, of various sizes, big and little.

"What are these?" asked the younger man.

"The keys of the house, sir. I supposed you would take possession."

"Take them back, Mr. Chaffin. Do you think I'm disposed to turn you out o' doors? Take them back. When I want them you shall know it."

"O, Bonnaville! I thought—" he began, but could say no more. His head drooped, and tears gushed from his eyes.

"Mr. Chaffin," said Bonnaville, after a pause, "understand me. I am your friend. You must confide in me. It may be weeks, perhaps months, before I shall determine what to do. In the mean time, go right on with the business affairs as usual. I leave everything in your hands. You see, I'm not afraid to trust you. Was you not my foster parent's *faithful* steward, as he expressed in his will? Can you not be the same to *me*?"

The agitated listener earnestly nodded in reply.

"It has been my privilege for some time past, Mr. Chaffin, to look into the requirements imposed by the sacred volume. I find there nothing more plainly set forth than the great principle of *forgiveness*. Pardon me for reference to the power of temptation, besetting us on every hand, and to which it was your calamity to yield. Greater men than you or I have fallen. Did they sink so deep that pardon could not raise them? Peter, in his hour of peril, yielded. Was tempted even to the denial of his Master. The Master blotted out the sin. Read we not of the temptation besetting the monarch of Israel, when he gazed down into the pool of the bathing Bath-sheba? Was he not led to set the Hittite husband in the fore front of the hottest battle? Yet Bath-sheba's son, the glorious Solomon, under divine control, graced afterward the throne of David. It is the divine requisition, binding on all, that we forgive. If my brother sin against me, shall I forgive him *seven times*? demanded Peter. Yea; *seventy times seven*, was the answer of the son of God."

Many eyes opened very wide the following Sunday morning, when the Chaffin carriage drew up to the church door. Out of it came Chaffin and Bonnaville Cresson; the latter turning to assist Mrs. Chaffin and her daughter to alight. Side by side with the young lady, following the husband

and wife, he entered the house of worship and took seat in the Chaffin pew. Bonnaville brushed the skirts of Florence Craft as he came up the crowded aisle. When seated, the two were in positions admitting plain sight of each other. Through the entire service, he noticed that Florence sat with averted face.

The young man returned in the same company and remained at Chaffin's for dinner. During the afternoon, he sat with him and family on the shaded porch. It failed not to attract the notice of many passersby.

A public display was noticed the day following, as the two men rode from place to place over the premises. The employees were all given to understand they were to follow the direction of Mr. Chaffin as aforetime.

All this was followed, during a few weeks succeeding, by frequent visits and continued intercourse between the families of Mr. Chaffin and that of Antioch. It was current rumor after a while amongst the town gossips that a matrimonial alliance would soon more effectually cement the two households.

On the return of Reuben Haley, Mr. Cobe Stott was sent for, and a partition was in due form made and concluded, by and between the sisters of John Cresson and Bonnaville. There was sufficient and more of the personal effects, in the nature of bonds

and mortgage liens, to make up the shares of Mrs. Haley and Mrs. Craft. There was left undivided a coffee and sugar plantation in the Island of Cuba. Bonnaville was, at his earliest leisure, to go to Cuba, and ascertain something of its value; and, if possible, make sale of it, for the benefit of the three parties.

A host of mechanics was set to work in the construction of two buildings. One at Antioch, near the white oak, a dwelling of suitable style and proportions for the accommodation of Mother Madden and Bonnaville, with any increase of family chance might throw in his way. The second edifice to be erected on the adjoining property, belonging to Corporal Girty.

These enterprises kept the younger man occupied for several months. He had little time for social exchanges, but was kept at home. After a time, feeling that he might leave the completion of his new structures in other hands, with letters of attorney drawn by the other two legatees, authorizing him to make sale of the coffee plantation, he sailed for Cuba.



CHAPTER XXII.

"I think bleak winter here before his time.
The summer of our days, his frosty hand
Grips with unwelcome welcome."

Bonnville had not been gone more than a week, when Corporal Girty came one morning to Miss Clarke, in something of excitement. He held a letter in his hand.

"There it is, Molly," he exclaimed. "We are in for it, sure."

"I don't understand, Corporal."

"Matrimony. Matrimony staring us in the face. Look at that."

He handed her a letter from his English attorney. It contained the welcome intelligence that the suit in Chancery was at an end, and the money awaiting his order.

"What shall we do?" he demanded, receiving the letter back.

"I think, Corporal Girty, the best thing would be to go and get the money. How does it strike you?"

"I'm agreed. When shall we go?"

"In a month's time. Will that answer?"

"Just by way of accommodation, Molly, couldn't you pare that down a clip or two? A month is a huge spell. Try again."

"Three weeks?"

"Gracious! You hold on to your time like a miser. Did your time cost you so much?"

"Two weeks?"

"That's more sensible. Keep on, Molly."

"One week."

"Done! That clears the fog. A big thing can be reached in short metre, when parties see eye to eye. Get your goods and chattels packed at once. I'm off to the tailor's for a bottle-green coat."

Florence Craft, of late in a state of depressed spirits and poor health, decided to accompany the two friends. Her physician had advised a sea voyage. When, therefore, all preparations were completed, and the marriage ceremony had taken place, the trio set sail for England.

The very day of their arrival in the English city, in one of the apartments of their hotel, Florence encountered a young man, looking in a disconsolate way out of the window. She was about leaving the room, when he accidentally turned his face towards her. It was Bonnaville Cresson.

"Why, Florence!" he exclaimed in a sort of physical tremor.

"How do you do, Mr. Cresson?" she asked in dignified reserve.

"I can scarcely think it possible," he continued, advancing. "Shall we not shake hands?"

"Certainly," and her hand met his.

"You can't imagine how great my pleasure is in meeting you."

"It's all very natural, Mr. Cresson. It would be singular if we failed to greet any of our neighbors in a strange land."

The young man was confounded. There was no pressure in the hand he had grasped. He seemed unable to add anything further in the way of remark. He stood in silent embarrassment. The young lady broke the silence.

"I thought you in Cuba, Mr. Cresson?"

"I expected to be there at this time. In a gale, our vessel was dismasted. A Liverpool merchantman brought me here."

"Are you stopping at this hotel?"

"Yes."

"Then we shall probably see you again. Good morning."

"I hope so," and he bowed her out.

Bonnaville sat down. Here had been a new experience. It was the most embarrassing of his lifetime. Was this the companion of his childhood? Or was it a stranger? What had he done, or left undone, invoking this chill formality? Was it his fault?

"Yes," he said to himself. "Yes; it is all mine. What has been actuating me for months is without excuse. I don't blame her. It was all my error. What demonstration of even common civility have I shown towards her for months? As I look it over now, I can't see how it has so occurred. I must make immediate reparation. I will allow no delay."

As he sprang up under heat of purpose, the Girty's entered. They were delighted beyond measure. With the impulsive habit of long-past years, the Corporal caught him up in his strong arms. Then handing him over to the other, she gave him the cordial salutation of a kiss.

"I allow that in special instances," said the Corporal; "but as a general thing set down my foot on it."

"One of the privileges of a married woman, Mr. Cresson," said the lady. "The Corporal and I are here on our honeymoon."

"Indeed! Nothing could give me more pleasure."

"It seems to me, my boy," the Corporal continued, "you look a trifle blue. Is it the salt water, or what?"

"Extreme vexation," said Bonnaville.

"Now, let us hear," returned the other.

"I may, to you two. The fact is, I am in a way I can walk no longer. I shall lose my reason.

Here I met Florence a few minutes ago, cold as ice. It has shocked me. I can neither eat nor sleep without some understanding. I believe I am in the wrong. Under this impression I am willing to do anything in the world to put matters right.

"Just the proper thing, my boy," said the Corporal. "Stick right there. I remember a few times being on the wrong side of the fence myself. Molly, how do you say?"

"I am waiting for my opinion to be asked," she replied.

"I *do* ask it, and with earnestness," returned Bonnaville. "Nothing is more needed. Here we are together on a foreign shore; both from the same place, and in divided mood.

"I will do anything to ease my heart, good friends. Such emotions as I am under can't be borne."

"Been through it all," said Corporal Girty. "But right side up at last. Molly, express yourself. I believe once under way, you steer straight to port as anybody alive."

Mrs. Girty, without audible reply, stepped to the side of the room and rang the bell. A waiting man soon entered.

"This gentleman," she said, pointing to Bonnaville, "would have you take his card to Miss Craft, in No. 21, and inquire if he may see her."

Bonnville's card was put in his hand. It was taken to No. 21. In a few minutes the waiter returned with word that Miss Craft would be pleased to have the gentleman wait upon her.

"Now, my lad," said Corporal Girty, "the bars are down. Do your best, and luck attend you. You'll find Molly and me waiting for you in No. 19."

Bonnville was led by the servant to No. 21.

"Florence," he began at once, on entering the room, "I have sought permission to come to you that I might relieve my mind and heart of a cumbersome load. I have spent a most unhappy hour since I stood in your presence. I deem outspoken candor at all times best; and in that strain ask you to hear me."

"It is a commendable strain at all times, Mr. Cresson. I have endeavored to observe it for many years. Of course, I shall be pleased to hear you."

"You have caused me great agony of feeling."

"I am very sorry for it."

"And I think your goodness of heart will afford me relief."

"You flatter me. How can I do so great a thing?"

"Give me some reason for the coldness of your demeanor."

"Ah! don't ask me to do that. The explanation

would open again a volume of human life I had considered closed. Aye, closed forever. Is it not better things most unpleasant, once buried, remain so?"

"If you mean our past life, I would hope not. That past is still my *present*."

"Not mine."

"It pains me beyond measure to hear that."

"It pains me to say it."

"Florence, if I have any fervent, honest desire of heart, eclipsing all others, it is for your welfare and happiness."

"I reciprocate that wish with pure sincerity."

"If you will permit me, let me say, you alone hold dominion over my heart's affections. Nor is it a new or transient passion that has swayed, and sways me still. It began in childhood, and has strengthened with the lapse of years. Surely, you are not unmindful of the days, the blissful days, we spent together?"

"No. Believe me, I am not."

"And now I come to you in all the fervor of my soul, and beg, if anything in the past has raised a barrier to our united fortunes, it may be removed at once. I am now what I have always been, yours only. But one thing remains to make perfect my condition in life, and that is your consent to share that life with me. May I ask that?"

"I thank you very much, Mr. Cresson; but must decline. Decline what at one time, indeed for a long time, was my brightest hope in this world. A hope that bore me up through many long and weary years. And now—but—"

She could not finish. A flood of tears burst forth. With a wave of the hand she dismissed her suitor.

Two months the Girty's and Florence spent in England, Scotland, France and Germany. Twice they fell in with Bonnaville. Once, for a day, at Dumfries, and afterwards a few hours at Bingen on the Rhine.

Corporal Girty brought home with him what made him a rich man. Florence brought with her restored health. Bonnaville, at the time of their leaving, it was understood, was still somewhere on the continent. The time of his expected return was unknown.



CHAPTER XXIII.

"There be some sports are painful."

Before Florence sailed for England, a part of Mrs. Craft's portion had been invested in the purchase of a productive farm. The deed for the same, as in many other improvident instances, had been drawn in the name of her husband as grantee. It was near to Antioch, and the family had moved in. The mansion house had been properly furnished, and the farm completely stocked. It was regarded as a judicious outlay, as from the industrious habits of Mr. Craft, under the supervision of Mr. Chaffin, it was presumed the happiness and comfort of the family would be secured.

To this home, on landing on our shores, Florence directed herself driven. She arrived there after night had set in. A dim light was apparent in the dining room, and she heard the clatter of knives and forks. With a flutter of joy in her heart, she bounded up the steps, and without knocking at the door, glided in. To occasion the family a wonderful surprise, she burst open the door of the eating apartment, shouting forth as she did so, "Room! room for one more!"

"Get out!" was the challenge of a large, bluff

man, sitting at the head of the table. "Out of here, you crazy slut. Be off, I say."

"Excuse me," faltered Florence in her confusion.

"If you don't pack, I'll oust you in a hurry," said the man, rising from his chair.

"I beg pardon, sir. I thought I was in the house of my father, Peter Craft."

"Bless my stars!" exclaimed the housewife, coming to her feet. "I see it's Miss Florence. By the light of one candle I didn't know you. You shall take supper with us, Miss Craft. May be you don't know me? But I've seen you often. Take a seat here at the table. It may not be as grand as you've no doubt found it over the other side of the water; but you're very welcome. Come, sit down."

"I thank you. I can't eat anything. Let me ask where father and mother are. I didn't know they had moved from here. Where are they? Have they rented the place to you?"

"Rented!" answered the man. "We've bought. Bought at Sheriff's sale. Paid the money down. We don't *rent*."

"What is all this?" the young woman asked, all the color fading from her face. "A Sheriff's sale! Where are father and mother?"

"Can't tell," returned the man. "Can you, Betsy?"

"I believe," said the wife, "Mrs. Craft is at Haley's. Mr. Craft, I'm told, is working round by the day. He boards at the tavern."

"How can all this be possible? I don't comprehend it. At day's work, you say? Boarding at the tavern! What has been the matter?"

"A good deal the matter," answered the man. "I can soon tell you, if you wish to know."

"I *do* wish it. Let me hear even the worst."

"Speculation. Speculation did it, Miss Craft. It was a clean sweep. All went like snow."

"All the property, do you mean? Not all of mother's inheritance?"

"Not a stiver left, Miss Craft."

"And in so short a time! It passes belief. How *could* it be possible? What was the matter?"

"A dog churn."

"A *what*?"

"A bit of rascality, Miss Craft. A patent right game. A vagabond from down East with a dog churn. By his account the like had never been seen since creation. He dilated on it, down at the tavern, till things were red hot. There were untold millions in it, he said; and he had the whole United States of America to dispose of. He would sell rights for counties, or whole States. If a purchaser could be found of sufficient means, he'd sell the whole concern. Mr. Craft first bought

a State. Then he concluded he'd take another. And the rascal went on blowing and snorting about the fortune he was throwing away, and how rich and mightiful the purchaser would become, that Mr. Craft finally took the whole Union. Well, there was a big promissory note given. This was passed off to the rascal's chum over in New York, and finally on came the Sheriff with an execution, and away went Craft's property, lock, stock and barrel. I bought this farm and all on it; cheap as dirt."

"*Do* sit down at the table and eat something," said the wife.

"I will sit, madam. But how can I eat? There's more than enough in this dreadful story to take away all appetite. I must go at once to Aunt Haley's. My trunk is at the door, and I must contrive some way to get it there also. The man who brought me has gone back to his home."

"Don't let that disturb you," said the man of the house. "Eat your supper. I'll find a way to get the trunk taken."

When the meal was over, the farmer hitched to his team, and conveyed the distressed passenger to her aunt's. Her mother first knew of her arrival, and met her at the gate.

"Don't utter a word about it, mother," the daughter said after the tender greeting. "I know what you are about to say. I've heard all about

it already. Let it rest; and let it not disturb our sleep until morning. I will think it over in bed. So we'll lay it aside for the present."

The coming morning found the young woman prepared to face the emergency. Her plans were laid. To her mother only were they confided. At the end of a week's time, Florence had disappeared. Gone as suddenly as did the boy, years before, from Antioch.

Some weeks afterward, Bonnaville Cresson landed at New York. He purchased a saddle horse, and sat out on his return home. His route, which he pursued with leisure, brought him over, for part of the way, the sands of New Jersey. It was both a pleasure and a novelty, tracking those partial wastes, under the pines, and across rivulets flowing on beds of luminous sand. On the soft bosom of the surface, left by the washing of the restless sea, his horse's footfalls had no echo. Nor had the wheels of cart or wagon, met at long intervals, the clangor known on stony roads. Silence reigned. Those pirates of the air, the buzzard, osprey and eagle, wheeled overhead. Now and then the wild deer, still denizens of the "Pines," loped in graceful bounds through the shadowy spaces, their white banners rocking from side to side.

Emerging from the woody desolation, he came out on more fertile ground. An expanse of agriculture; rich in the abundant resources hid beneath the surface, whose procreative power gave fruitfulness wherever cast. Green meadows clothed the banks of streams slowly winding amongst the gentle swells of the landscape.

Finally he reached a school house. It was of brick; octagonal in shape. On one of the affluents of the Assanpink, a stream flowing into the Delaware at Trenton, the humble temple of learning was delightfully situated. A grove of full grown trees embraced it. A charming place for the urchins of the school. Here their gambols were enjoyed; and on the mosses under the oaks they spread the contents of their dinner pails at the noonday hour.

When our horseman passed at a slow walk, the school was in session. He saw the lady teacher, sitting at her desk, intent on the making of a quill pen. She did not see him. Had she done so, a very much surprised man would have met her glance. If it was not Florence Craft whom Bonnaville saw, penknife in hand, it was the most remarkable of all resemblances. But people *do* look so much the one like another, as to puzzle us every now and then, were his conclusions as he passed on. Going a few furlongs forward, he met a boy. He reined up.

"My lad," said he, "this is a school house back here, I perceive. Can you tell me the teacher's name?"

"Why, sir. I think—I think—it's the new marm anyway. I can't get at her name jist. It's a short name like. I have hearn tell of it, too. Yes; I *do* know now. I havn't got used to it much. I don't go to school; I don't."

"And what is the name?"

"O, yes. I forgot. Why, it's Craft."

"What is her first name?"

"There you've got me," said the boy, scratching his head. It's a pretty name, though. Not a long one, nor a short one—kind a middlin'."

"Is it Florence?"

"You've got it," cried the boy. "That's it."

"Where does she board, my lad?"

"Boards round. A week to one place, and a week to a nuther. Can't tell where she puts in now."

"Whose place is that, off to the left?"

"That's Mr. Fields'. Don't board there."

"And whose place is that, out yonder?"

"That's Noble Reed's. Not there, nuther."

"And that place?"

"Robbins'. 'Taint there. Nor at Combes'. O, I ken tell you arter all. See that big house further on? There, beyent Robbins'?"

"Yes. I see the house."

"That's Doctor Taylor's. There's where she puts up."

"Thank you, my boy. Here is a shilling for your trouble."

He rode forward and dismounted at Doctor Taylor's gate. He found himself at the hospitable mansion of a Friend. His horse was put in the stable and every courtesy paid to himself.

When Bonnaville saw the children departing from the school house, homeward bound, he walked to that tenement. Miss Craft, having locked her desk and put on her bonnet, started towards the door. They met at the sill.

"This is treason," said Florence with an affable smile, extending her hand. "I never before deemed my mother capable of conspiring with you, or anybody else. I suppose it is owing to her being mortal."

"And what you are saying, is to me a riddle," returned Bonnaville. "I can say in my defense, that I have had no correspondence with your mother, either by word or letter, for several months."

"And you are not from her *now*, direct?"

"No."

"How did you track me, then?"

"Believe me, Florence, I have not tracked you.

I am just from off ship; and wending my way homeward on horseback, I saw you through the window in riding past. I am the guest of Doctor Taylor."

"My present boarding place! We'll go there at once."

"May we not have a few words first? I am anxious to learn what your presence here, and occupation, means."

"That can all be explained after tea. We must not keep the good folks waiting. So let's go."

After the evening meal, and as the sun was sinking to the Princeton hills, the couple went forth. Down over the green meadows they found their way, where everything around them charmed the sense. The clear whistle of the lark was heard from the topmost bough; and the night hawk sported in the summer air, above their heads. There were the lowing of distant herds; the returning plowman, with snatches of song; the never-ceasing prattle of children at every doorway.

The pair talked without cessation. Various were the subjects. But nothing said on the *one* subject lying so near to both hearts. Over three fences the gentleman assisted his companion to climb. He took a very warm hand in his each time. Over a bad slough it was necessary to cross, and upon no better bridge than a fence rail.

The rail rolled slightly under the maiden's feet, as is sometimes the case, and Bonnaville caught her in his arms. But for that she might have gone into the slough. She thanked him for the timely aid, and they passed on. It grew more dusk. But the moon came up full and bright. How an evening stroll is aided by the moon!

It might have been ten at night before these thoughtless people reached Doctor Taylor's porch. But what was the sum total of the promenade? Once Bonnaville, on learning the sad state of things whereby the young woman was driven to her present drudgery, had kindly proffered substantial aid. The young lady, however, turned upon him an electric glance, so armed with reproach, that he craved pardon. It had been better for him if the prompting of his generosity had had no tongue. The offer caused a few minute's silence on both sides.

We have asked above, what was the sum total of the stroll. It is easily told. *Nothing*. What was accomplished by that chat upon the porch, in the moonlight? *Nothing*. So time runs to waste. Heart-sore, the returned traveler went to bed. When morning succeeded a restless night, his horse was brought to the door, and he departed from the winding Assanpink. He went, charged with the requisition to observe silence regarding the young lady's whereabouts. So he started on

his way, once more to share the changeless affection of the good woman of Antioch.

When within a mile of his home, Bonnaville came to a gang of laborers, engaged in cleaning out a farm ditch. The rains had, for a few years past, carried into it a deposit of sediment. Wet weather had lately softened the mass, and the labor of removing it was very difficult. A man past middle age was engaged with the others; now up to his knees in muck, shovel in hand, panting in the oppressive heat of the day. His face shielded by a large straw hat, the horseman did not at first recognize him. But when, assailed by the uncouth mockery of his fellows, the enervated man came struggling up the bank with a wheelbarrow load of the dripping mud, to his astonishment he discovered it was Peter Craft. At the same moment the latter recognized the rider.

"Hard work this," said Peter, puffing out the words, and removing his hat to wipe the sweat from his face.

"Is it in sport you are thus occupied, Mr. Craft?" he demanded.

"No," returned he, trying to put on a jocular air, "not exactly that. It's *bread*. We must eat, you know."

"Can't you engage others to do this unpleasant work?"

"It's not mine. *Others* have engaged *me*."

"As a laborer?"

"Yes."

"Drop that barrow at once, Mr. Craft. Put on your coat and come with me. I'm fatigued with riding so long. Get on this horse, and I will walk. Don't hesitate. Do as I tell you."

"Hadn't I better get my half-day's pay first? There's a trifle due me. I think I've earned it."

"Don't tarry for your pay. Mount this horse. I will see you compensated."

"Let me get my dinner pail first. It hangs on a limb but a few steps out yonder."

"Never mind the pail, Mr. Craft. I'm in a hurry."

"I've a sort of a jacket, too. Let me get that."

"No. Never mind the jacket. Get on this horse."

"Sha'n't I muddy your saddle?"

"Very like. But mount nevertheless."

They moved off together; the ditcher presenting a spectacle in his garb, ill befitting the trappings of his steed.

On the way the footman acquired much information regarding events occurring subsequently to his quitting the place, months before. Amongst other things, he became satisfied the father of

Florence Craft was ignorant of her place of sojourn. He learned also that the new mansion house at Antioch was fully finished and furnished, and that Mother Madden was installed as its first occupant. Corporal Girty and wife had taken possession of their new dwelling, called JUNIPER, from a tree of that kind standing at the gate. The Corporal, he understood had been promoted to the captaincy of a new company of rifle rangers; and was ardently engaged during spare hours, in the study of various books of tactics.

Pixley was doing well. He was operating the mills and factory with better success than ever before. His daughter, it was rumored, was receiving the attentions of Cobe Stott; a rising man in his profession.

But the last item of information he obtained from Peter on the way, surprised him most of all. Augustus Chaffin, aided by some friends, had been enabled to purchase a truck farm, that he was managing with very great success, and it was thought he would become rich. It was a farm over in New Jersey. Beyond Princeton, Peter said; on the headwaters of a stream called the Assanpink.

Bonnville ceased asking further questions for some distance. Over on the Assanpink! He had just left there. And was not *Florence* on the Assanpink?

"How did this come about, Mr. Craft?" he asked. "How was he able to buy a farm?"

"Well. These Taylor's; down in the lower end of the county, you know? Somehow Augustus got in with them. They're all rich as Jews. They've a brother over on the Assanpink. A Doctor Taylor. It was through him the farm was secured. I hope Augustus will do well. Myself and wife and Florence always thought the world and all of Augustus. Florence and he are very thick. I always thought they'd make a match. And I don't know but they may yet; now Augustus is doing so well."

Before reaching Antioch, Peter was taken successively to the tailor, the shoemaker and the hatter. He was measured for a new suit. Then, with his wife, he was escorted to the recent abode of Mother Madden. The wife was furnished means to furnish it anew. And here, under the protection of Bonnaville, he designed supplying them with their daily bread.



CHAPTER XXIV.

"If the world have other boons, what of it?
My heart lacks room. Fame, fortune, ambition's
crown,
Are dross to him whose cup runs o'er."

* In the beams of the August sun, his breakfast over, the young proprietor of Antioch took his seat alone on the piazza of the new mansion. The village lay below him; its occupants astir at the commencement of another day of toil. The clouds were drifting at slow pace over the landscape; and the murmurs of the Neshaminy were music to the ear. His possessions, in shape of busy wheels and clattering machinery, as well as far stretches of cleared and timber lands, were in sight. To the most of men there had been much in all this to satisfy the heart, and excite feelings of exultant pride. Some time he sat in musing contemplation. Then began a half whispering conversation to himself.

"Poor is the consolation of self communion," he remarked. "Little good does it now afford. In the spring of life I begin to feel its winter. What am I drinking, in sight of all this, but the dregs of bitterness and gall? What are lands and gold, with an insatiate thirst for a cup withheld? I look out on the possessions fortune has bestowed, and they are but dregs. For the joy my soul is

craving, I would renounce them all with supreme delight. Aye, decrepitude, poverty, banishment—anything is preferable to the pangs of a longing, fruitless hope. What has been my sin, that invokes a penalty so great?"

"My child," said Mother Madden coming out, "I think thee is in trouble. Can thee confide in me? It is thought relief comes, sometimes, by unburthening the mind and heart. What is it?"

"Sore perplexity, mother. But is it not better I bear it alone? Why should I trouble thee?"

"I am used to perplexities. I can bear yet more. If not, I should avoid seeking to know thine."

"My heart is pained."

"Thee has my sympathy."

"I doubt not that. I have been cruelly disappointed."

"And has thee given up all hope?"

"Yes, mother; all. I think she trifles with me."

"Is thee sure? It is hard to believe."

"Sure as of anything palpable. Thee can understand the depth of the wound. All my expectations, hope, life itself, centered in her. In her alone. I know no other love. And all is blasted. My life's plans defeated. My peace overthrown. And now, could I find relief, I'd seek it at the ends of the earth. This place is grown distasteful. I have been thinking of foreign lands. They might,

as my hope indicates, yield the boon of forgetfulness. But I only disturb and grieve thee by giving utterance to all this."

"Not so much in speaking of them, my son, as thee would in withholding them. Allow me the mother's place, always. What is thy sorrow is mine; and thy joys, mine also. Has it not been always so?"

"Always. The Lord above us knows it."

"Then go not from me. Stay at least, until the place that knows me now, shall know me no more."

"I'll stay, mother. Don't add more. I'll stay."

"I maun say I'm ower deleeted to tak' ye ance mair by the hond, Meester Cresson," said Colin McCallom, coming on the piazza. "It's a lang day syne I hae seen ye. An' I wad trust ye are weel?"

"Very well, indeed Mr. McCallom. And I hope the world has gone well with you since I was here?"

"The warl a' gangs weel wi' me, Meester Cresson. I hae at a' times a clear conscience an' guid digestion. I caun eat my supper as the sun gaes doon, an' close my twa een an the hale warl in fu' peace o' min'. An' it was na for the guid gifts o' the heavenly Father, Meester Cresson, what

meeserable lives should we a' hae? An' ye hae come back to 'bide wi' us, noo?"

"Come at last to stay, friend Colin," returned the lady.

"And is it Peter Craft I see in yont house, Meester Cresson?"

"Yes. He lives there now. I have taken him under my care."

"Guid o' ye, my lad. Guid o' ye. Peter is nae better than a meeserable lout at best. I dinna think he's capable o' takin' care o' himsel'. An' his lassie, ye min'? Is she there, too?"

"She is absent, Mr. McCallom."

"Better that, let me say, than hobnobbin wi' that slouch o' Chaffin's. I hae na seen him o' late. Ken ye where he hae gone?"

"To the State of New Jersey, I am told."

"I am conteent he stay there, Meester Cresson. I wad na greet should he be lang time awa'."

"I am told our old acquaintance, Cobe Stott, is doing well in his profession, Mr. McCallom?"

"Nane better. Nane better, Meester Cresson. I was ane o' the jury at the Session. An' Cobe Stoott was about fu' o' beesness a' the time; takin' part in ilka treal, Meester Cresson. The Judge himsel' leestened wi' great respect to a' the chiel had to say about the points o' law. An' auld counsellor Hen, ye min', Meester Cresson? But

did na Cobe Stoott cut the auld' rooster's coomb? It was e'en like a shepherd mon at a shearin'. The jury laughed and shook their sides, wi' the tears rinnin' doon their cheeks. Hech! but the bonny lad pokit the auld Hen ahint the ribs, wi' that lang tongue o' his, till the Court room rang agin. It was guid as a play."

"Let me ask after Granny Lomison, Mr. McCallom. I have a kindly recollection of her. She's well, I trust?"

"Weel! Ye maun think sae. The auld leddy is e'en exalted aboon the skies. She scare kens whether she's in the body or out o' it."

"How so, Mr. McCallom?"

"Ye bear in min' that meeserable patch work o' a blanket brought into Court?"

"Very well, indeed. I have good reasons to bear it in mind."

"Weel, sir, Judge Nesbitt, (the Laird keep him,) havin' the auld tatters in min' na doot, sends the auld leddy, here o' late, the maist elegant pair, (frae the Scotch looms, min' ye,) that wad do honor to the bed o' a queen. There's a mon for ye, noo! I a' wear sic a mon'niest my heart, Meester Cresson. He ne'er forgets the demands o' charity. Guid wad it be, if the warl was fu' o' sic men as Judge Nesbitt. The like o' him do honor to the bench; a post I ken weel, sometimes

disgraced wi' worthless tresh. But time gangs by, good frien's, an' I must awa' to the shop. Sae I maun bid ye baith guid morning."

[*A few extracts from the journal of Molly Girty, nee Clarke.*]

"JUNIPER.

"How extremely happy I am. I record it here that people may read it in succeeding ages. Settled down for life. My lot suits me to a T. A beautiful house; grand farm; green lawn; plenty of chickens, and a fond husband.

"How pleasant is adoration. I am an idol. On the giddy height of supremacy! And to look at the beginning. That hollow log! The discovery of the little mole on my chin! *Mirabile visu!* From that hour in thy bowels, O, sacred sycamore, a hope sprang up engulfing all things else. Now I recur to that past, with thanksgiving of heart. I pride myself on wise and constant patience. I waited. Waited under the boughs till the fruit ripened to a fall.

"MOLLY GIRTY!!! There's a name! I write it with pride at the tip of my pen. With that came wealth, and bliss, and *Phineas*. So, was he christened. He should have had a sweeter cognomen, had I been consulted. I would have called him Alexander the Great. Phineas? I call him Cor-

poral yet. It was under this flag I slew—I mean, *captured* him.

“After all the perils of girlhood, my domain at last assigned me in Bucks. Glorious county of the keystone! Habitat of William the founder. But a few miles away his mansion yet stands, guarded by the reverence of the people he loved. There yet is his brewhouse. It is said the good old gentleman drank beer. Seated on the shores of his beloved Delaware, his gladdened eye swept up and down the silvery expanse. There, came the children of the forest to greet the gentle spirited Friend; and to smoke with him the pipe of peace. No lingering perfume of that sacred symbol abides now in the shifting air. Smokers and pipe we read of as things buried. But peace, competence, prosperity, happy homes and fertile fields are here. *And so is Phineas!*

“Three weeks since I wrote the above. A letter now from Florence Craft. She has heard her parents have found a cherishing hand. Her school, (as she says she is a teacher,) will close the last of September, and then she returns. It is now the end of August.

“Colonel Gardiner, the British officer who lay wounded at Haley’s, and who testified at Court, has been here. He and Bon, (as I shall always call him,) have had some business transactions.

He has purchased land of Bon, and will move here in a few week's time.

"Mr. Chaffin is reinstated in the people's good graces, and is a very happy man. He is still Bon's superintendent. The latter, considering that Chaffin had managed the estate so well for years, greatly increasing its value and amount, has made him a deed for his old residence, with the contents of the house, barn, stables, &c. The rumor is now confirmed that Miss Chaffin will be married soon to Cobe Stott. It is considered on all hands she is marrying well. I am glad to hear of anybody's marrying well. I married well myself."

[End of the journal, thus far.]



CHAPTER XXV.

"O, happy love! where love like this is found!
O, heartfelt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've paced much this weary mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare—
If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the
ev'ning gale."

October, in her radiant robes, draws on. Matchless the glory of the scene. Beauty arrayed for sepulture. Decay and splendor, side by side, fit bearers of the summer's bier. The rippling waters of the streams exult in brilliant hues, reflected from overhanging limbs. The ripening fruits dangle in mingled tints from orchard boughs. In copse and wood are busy laborers. The jay and squirrel, tireless toilers, are harvesting their winter stores. The feathered tribes take wing upon their annual pilgrimage. The flocks and herds turn from the withering pastures to seek the sheltering roof.

Called from his home the last day of October, to be absent a week, Bonnaville met in the highway, near the Delaware, two persons in a gig. One of them, Augustus Chaffin, sprang out of the vehicle, and rushed to Bonnaville with extended hand.

"Mr. Cresson," he exclaimed in earnest candor, "I am very glad to see you. Let me introduce you to my wife."

Bonnville made his best bow to Mrs. Chaffin, and stated his pleasure in meeting her.

"We have been married but a few days," the young man remarked, "and are on our first visit home. We shall be very happy to see you while there."

"I will be certain to wait upon you and Mrs. Chaffin. It will afford me sincere pleasure. And it will be very agreeable for me to entertain you at my house. I shall be away for a few days, but you may expect to see me as soon as I return."

The parties separated mutually gratified. A slight weight was lifted from the proprietor of Antioch. He had met a *married* man. He mused upon it as he rode. A Benedict!

Florence came with October. She passed her time very pleasantly at the former mansion of Mother Madden. In the surrounding groves and beside the Neshaminy, there was found delightful means of pastime. Up and down the path her child's feet had hastened over so many times, she now found great delight in straying. She was treading it one particular afternoon. Her apron filled with wild flowers, she sat down to arrange them in order. It was at the place where she and

her young lover had parted years before. Generally, she made a point in pausing at this place. There was a green, mossy bank to sit on. And there she sat at this particular juncture, her head almost buried in her lap, intent on business, when a shadow fell upon her collection of autumn flowers. She suddenly looked up. A man was standing near her.

"Florence!" was his surprised exclamation.

"Bon!"

"It's pleasing to be called by that name once more."

"It's pleasing, too, to please," she returned.

"May I come and sit by you?"

"Why not? The bank is spacious enough. It will please me if you do."

"Thank you. Well, you take me by surprise. I didn't know you had come."

"There was no surprise intended. I came with better design."

"Might one venture to hope our community will be honored with your continuing presence?"

"I am unable to answer."

"Can the pleasure of teaching a school draw you hence?"

"No. I have found little pleasure in the occupation."

"Then why return to it, let me ask?"

"For several reasons."

"Good ones no doubt, or they would not govern your action. Pardon me for asking the question."

"I do not condemn your asking it. And you will pardon me for not answering. The reasons I might deem sufficient might not be so regarded by others."

"Might an old friend tender advice?"

"On what subject?"

"I dare not say. It might be deemed presumption."

"If not presuming, might an old friend ask of *you* a question?"

He. A hundred.

She. One will do for the present.

He. I shall be pleased to hear it.

She. Why did you leave me and keep silence so many years?

He. Why did you not permit me to come to you, *here* on this very spot? And refuse me even a word?

She. It was my error; caused by sudden confusion. I did turn to welcome you, and you were gone.

He. I returned, however. And why then did you treat me with such neglect?

She. Let me ask this: Why, for months, did you hold yourself aloof from *me*?

He. Wrong—all wrong. I admit it. Confess it in remembrance of months of agony. But why were you so chill and frosty on the other side of the ocean?

She. Why did you afterward insult me on *this* side of it?

He. I know not that I ever did.

She. You wounded my pride.

He. Where, and how?

She. You reflected on my poverty, by offering pecuniary aid over on the Assanpink.

He. Let purity of intent be my excuse. But Florence, how does it chance that you seem to have forgotten the oft-repeated vows of long ago? Vows that we would live for each other, and for each other alone?

She. Forgotten them! *You* seemed to have forgotten them.

He. O, no, no, no. By no means. Never for a moment. Not the least part or particle have I forgotten.

She. Neither have I.

He. So! But this is only *memory*. What I would say is, my *heart* has never in the slightest degree known change. Further, those early vows I regard as binding on me to this hour.

She. I can truly say the same.

He. *My* Florence!

(Here we skip a few things. It's not worth while to tell all. The dialogue was resumed.)

She. There!

He. O! excuse me. Let me gather them up again.

She. No need. There are other flowers in the wood.

He. Just this rose, at any rate. Two of them, I see. How beautiful! Take one.

She. Thanks.

He. Florence!

She. Well?

He. It is a beautiful world, after all.

She. I have long thought so.

He. And this sacred spot! Once more has the guiding Hand brought us here together. How the tide of life sweeps us to and fro! It was here we parted.

She. O, that wretched, wretched hour!

He. No tongue or pen can paint it.

She. There is the bush I clung to for support.

He. Cling now to me. Let no power part us again, but the stern messenger who comes to each and all in turn.

She. A voice in my inmost heart cries out, amen.

He. And the question springs in mine, is all this *real*? As I look in your face, the blissful page of the past reopens. We are in the old path once

more; and side by side renew our pilgrimage. It is with hearts overflowing we lift up a joint note of thanksgiving unto God.

She. May His grace attend us.

He. Amen. Our Prophet, Priest and King! May it ever be under his leading. Truly, "there is a divinity in our ends, rough-hew them how we may." Where the cord was severed, are the strands rewoven. Now let us go. There are those at Antioch with tears of joy will learn this history. Come.

Candles, lamps and torches illuminated the hill at Antioch. The surrounding grounds, throughout their space, gleamed in floods of light. The mansion house shot forth a blaze from every window. Even the old dwelling by the white oak, where the marriage service was to take place, hung with transparent paper lamps, had its charm of rustic beauty.

A few hours before this, a stranger had arrived in the village. He stepped from his traveling carriage at the hotel, and ordered his horses put up for the night. Colin McCallom, who was passing at the moment, recognized in the new-comer his Excellency, President Washington. He stepped up on the porch where the distinguished man was standing, and held forth his hand.

"Meester President," he began, "I doubt na' ye'll allow a private citizen to offer ye his han'?"

"With pleasure, sir," the other responded, "with great pleasure. The more so, as I perceive you are a Caledonian. I have a high regard for your countrymen. I shall always regard it both a pleasure and an honor to take the hand of a Scotchman."

"I am truly thankfu' for the honor, your Excellency. I am rejoiced the guid folk o' the land eleveeted ye to the chair o' state. I hae read muckle o' your messages an' the lik', wi' baith pride an' satisfaction. Ye hae done a' things weel."

"I appreciate highly your commendation, my friend, and give you my thanks."

"I hae never expectit the thanks o' so great a mon as the President; an' think the mair o' it, ye may weel understan'. Hae ye any recollection, Meester President, bein' in these parts afore?"

"O, very well, sir. During the war we had much to do about here. I was frequently back and forth on this same road."

"An' it's just possible your Excellency may bear in min' a fute race, wi' a company o' bairns?"

"I remember it, sir. A well contested race. I even invested a guinea in it. There was a lad with one sleeve. And I remember how a little miss caught the victor in her arms."

"The bonny lad is e'en aboot to return the compliment, your Excellency. This time he will tak' the lass in *his* arms. Turn aboot is fair play, as I hae heard."

"A wedding then in progress? You very much delight me in intimating this particular pair are to be happy. He was a bright little fellow, sir.

"My supper is announced, my good man. I must leave you. After it is over, it will afford me pleasure to talk more."

As the high official started for his tea, Colin started for Antioch. He had an interview with the owner. In a short time he went back to the hotel, bearer of a pressing note of invitation for his Excellency to the wedding.

In the late dwelling of Mother Madden the marriage ceremony took place. It was the mutual desire of the parties most concerned, that in the tenement where their youthful days were spent, the sacred rite should be performed. But in the *new* structure they repaired to receive their guests. And when the greeting was past, General Washington took his stand at the end of the apartment, and shook hands with the concourse, one by one, as they severally advanced. Many were there to share the distinction, for the invitations issued embraced all of the groom's early companions. In the passing column came Granny Lomison. Of course Bonnaville would not overlook her in

issuing invitations. The little matron came in her costliest dress. She was in a maze of delight. With her hand in that of the mightiest man of the age, she was in transports.

"It affords me pleasure to greet you, Mrs. Lomison," said the President, looking down upon her with a benign expression. "For many years I found hospitable entertainment beneath the roofs of people in your walk of life. You have a husband?"

"No, sir. I hed. The measles tuck him."

"Sad. Very sad, Mrs. Lomison. And you are left alone?"

"No, sir. I've got Tite. That's how I call him. His full name is Titus—arter his pap. Yender you see him, now. The measles got holt of him, but he cum through. And how do you do, Mr. Washington?"

"Well. Very well, madam."

"And all well to hum?"

"Well, too, I thank you."

"Don't scronge so, folks! Did I ever! I'll hev to move on, I spose. And I hed a sight deal more to say."

"Cobe Stott, Esquire," said the master of ceremonies, introducing that gentleman. "An old friend of the groom; now climbing the ladder of legal renown. An admirer of Alexander Hamilton."

"Ah! Mr. Stott. I approve your model. The nearer you approach to Mr. Hamilton, the wider will open to you the gates of fame. You have my hearty wishes to aid you."

"Judge Nesbitt," said the usher.

"Happy to form your acquaintance, sir. I prize associations with the members of the bench. You have a proud position in being placed over this intelligent and worthy people."

"I should appreciate that honor, Mr. President. But I come from another judicial district."

"Still of Pennsylvania?"

"Yes, sir."

"A grand State, Judge Nesbitt. Her soil gave birth to the noblest of patriots. From the Monongahela to the Delaware they flocked to my camp. Her statesmen and her soldiers claim and receive the nation's gratitude. Her jurists lend lustre to her name."

"Colonel Gardiner, Mr. President."

"Of the Revolution?" asked the latter.

"Yes, your Excellency."

"Of what division, Colonel Gardiner? I don't call you to mind."

"Of the British dragoons, sir."

"Ah! good reason I should not remember. You are none the less welcome, however. I meet my quondam foes quite often on terms of amity. Many of them remained here after the war."

"I remained to become a citizen," said the Colonel. "I had the honor to cast my first vote for your Excellency."

"My thanks. The long contest thinned our population. It is to our advantage so many of the choicest of the foreign element fill up the spaces. And it is well a feeling of amity prevails between us and the fatherland. Our people's veins have much of English blood. Should we not harmonize? I am glad, Colonel Gardiner, we are now on the same side.

"In this instance, announcement is unnecessary," said the President, as Colin McCallom was brought up. "I know this gentleman already. Indeed he met me, as it were, at the city gates. My hand is always open to that of Mr. McCallom."

"Your Excellency is ower guid. Ower guid, indeed. I had ne'er expectit sae great honor. I'll e'en write to my ain kin amang the heather, how muckle courtesy ye hae paid me. The tidings will stir the bluid o' a' the McCallom's; and will be tauld for many a year by a' their offspring at the ingle side. The Laird bless ye! I wad now gie mair for a single hair o' your Excellency's head, as a memorial o' this blissfu' hour, than for a' the gowd o' Ophir."

"Take this, my good Scottish friend," said the other, displacing and handing him one of the seals

from his watch chain. "At my time of life, all our *hairs* are useful."

"Guid, noo! Verra guid! Ye mak' this a blessed, blessed day wi' me. I'm whyles the proudest mon in America. I'm ower an' ower obleeged to ye. I wad ever wish ye weel. Aye, blithe an' cannie be the sunset o' your days, Mr. President. May the win's o' adversity ne'er blaw aboon your path."

"My fellow soldier of White Plains," exclaimed the high official, as Corporal Girty came up, with his wife on his arm. "I am glad we've met once more. I am falling in with my old campaigners day by day; men good and true in the hour of trial. I find them at the anvil, in the pulpit, at the plow; and in every state and condition they alike warm up my blood. My best wishes attend you, Corporal. This lady?"

"Bone of my bone, General."

"Truly, your obedient servant, madam," and he made her a low bow. "Though perhaps late, accept my congratulations. Fortune, it would seem, lay in your path, and you seized upon it. We find our best treasures in unexpected ways and places, madam."

"It was in a hollow buttonwood," said the Corporal.

"Good fruit came from it," said the other.

"Two crops," returned Corporal Girty. "The first was best. It bore my Bon. You can't forget that half-mile heat, General?"

"No, by no means. Did I not see Mrs. Girty there?"

"Certainly. On the fence," answered the Corporal.

"Questionable position," returned the other with a smile. "So at least in political life. It would seem to have resulted well in this instance. How could you be better off than under protection of a Corporal's arm?"

"A *Captain's*, your Excellency," returned Mrs. Girty. "His merits have led to promotion."

"Always at your service, General," said the husband. "If there's trouble at headquarters, send for me."

"Deborah Haley, Mr. President."

"I feel honored, good madam," and he bowed his head with reverence. "I yet hoard in memory the kind words uttered years ago. They were cheering to me at that trying hour. Distasteful as I knew my occupation was to your religious sect, I the more rejoiced in the message from your lips. Your invocation has been answered. The reign of peace is with us."

An hour later, the distinguished personage, accompanied by his Scotch friend, took his departure;

leaving as farewell utterance a commendation of the married pair to Him who measures to the dutiful and just the bountiful supplies of wisdom, competence and grace.



CHAPTER XXVI.

“Here sweeping through the ech’ing trees
Pass’d gently on the scented breeze;
And with the dawn’s resplendent rays,
Arose the robin’s tuneful lays;
While pearly dew, in silver show’r,
Bedeck’d the forest bud and flow’r.”

[*From the journal of Molly Girty.*]

Back again at Juniper. My husband, filling the office of Sheriff, we were obliged for some years to reside at the county seat. Bonnaville and Florence are home from abroad, after an absence of two years. Our official labors at an end, we are settled down in quiet. And home is best after all.

Yesterday was the anniversary of the wedding at Antioch. After twelve years. Florence and I the day before had made the arrangements. We decided to hold the anniversary at our deerlick. The children of both houses, big and little, were to be taken. The distance not exceeding the half part of a mile, Reuben and Deborah Haley, as also Mother Madden, were to be of the party. My husband invited Colin McCallom to go with us.

Consequently, yesterday morning we were astir at an early hour. Being the nutting season, the little folks, each with a basket or pail for chest-nuts, were full of vivacity and noise. Lunch baskets were filled and the weather glorious.

Colin appeared at the door in midst of the hurly-burly of preparation. The children, who all knew him by sight, were quick to gather round the venerable man.

"An' the name o' this winsome laddie, noo?" he inquired, patting our oldest boy on the head. "A cannie name, I hae na doot, Sherra Girty?"

"On my word of honor, Mr. McCallom, I'm ashamed to tell you. You will have to excuse me."

"His name is Phineas," I called out. "Phineas the second."

"Too true, Colin," said the Sheriff. "Don't blame me for it. I'm sorry on the boy's account, but it was madam's doings. Her mind was set on it, and I had to yield. I always do. My wish was to call him Israel Putnam."

"I don't think that a nice name," said our oldest daughter.

"An' ye speak my min', bonny lass. Ye maun put me doon o' the same opinion. I dinna think the Sherra guid in the matter o' names."

"My name is Florence," said the little girl with a proud wag of the head.

"An' a braw, braw ane, too, my little leddy. Braw as yoursel', I'm ower glad to say."

"And mine is Bonnaville," said the second boy.

"An' nane better could be foun', the world o'er, my wee mon. I wad hope ye maun tread in the steps o' him frae whom ye get it. Ah! I min' him weel when nae bigger than yoursel'; wi' his bright een and sonsie ways. Hech! but the memory o' ither days comes fresh ance mair to the min'! Wafu' wark it partly was. But the crookit came out straight, after a'."

"All ready!" I called out, taking up the baby. "Let us be going."

"Gie me that load, noo, Meestress Girty. I am a bit stronger in the arm than yoursel'. Gie me the bairn."

"With pleasure, Mr. McCallom," and I passed the child to him.

"A bonny bird ye are; wi' wee bit mou' and dimpled chin," he said, looking down on the little smiling face. "What wad I not gie to hae ye always makin' your sonsie faces at me, as ye are doin' noo?"

"I believe you were never married, Mr. McCallom?" I ventured to inquire.

"Nay, Meestress Girty. An' the waur hae it been for me, a' the way through life. Ye could nae guess what I wad gie for a young McCallom about this size under my roof."

We passed on to Antioch. The twelve years had made changes. The old tenement of Mother

Madden, by the white oak, was a marvel of rustic beauty. Newly roofed and sided, with gables and dormer windows, all painted in gay colors, it was in possession of the children as their play house. The grounds around the new tenement were well covered with trees and shrubbery.

The nutting party went to the deerlick. The prostrate, hollow buttonwood was still in place. The dry leaves, perhaps with additional accumulation in quantity, yet within it. We drew up in a circle at the opening. Bonnaville, surrounded with his wife and four little ones, had a flush of excitement on his features. Nothing was said for a few moments. Then a dialogue ensued, that we put in dramatic form:

Deborah. And *this* is the place we have heard so much of? Thy house of refuge?

Bonnaville. This was it, Aunt Deborah.

Deborah. Does thee remember all that occurred?

Bonnaville. O, no. Very little. A few things impressed themselves on the memory. One night a wolf, or possibly a fox, paid me a visit. I crept out and secured a stick to defend myself.

Reuben. How many nights was thee here?"

Bonnaville. I am not positive. Possibly two or three. It seems more and more strange, as I think of it, how, at that tender age, I was preserved.

Deborah. There is One cognizant of even the sparrow's fall, as we read. Thy safety was guarded by more than human care. The scene before us must produce great thankfulness?

Bonnaville. Indeed it does. As also thankfulness for the marvelous way in which I have subsequently been led.

Deborah. We find frequent corroboration of the poet's words:

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

He knows when and how to temper winds to the shorn lamb.

Colin. Verra true, your leddyship—verra true. It was sae wi' my ain countryman, Robert Burns. He hae put it doon

"— A blast o' Janwar win'
Blew hansel in on Robin."

Sheriff. Allow me to say, ladies and gentlemen, that more than one important event has taken place in this same hollow buttonwood.

All. What, Sheriff Girty?

Molly. Don't ask him.

All. O, yes. What was it?

Molly. He sha'n't say.

Sheriff. I can state it in a breath.

All. Do. Let's hear it.

Molly. I forbid it. Husband, don't utter a word. If you do, I'll tell about your song.

Bonnaville Girty. O, yes. Let's have that. Ma's new song.

Florence Girty. O, yes. It's beautiful, Aunt Deborah.

Phineas, Jr. Yeth—yeth. Tho it ith.

Florence G. Just *splendid*. Do sing it, ma.

Sheriff. Don't sing a line, Molly. I assure you it's all mere stuff.

All. The song—the song.

Molly. Well, then—

Sheriff. Molly, if you do, I'll ask for a divorce.

Molly. Ladies and gentlemen, let me explain. My husband and I together have composed—

Sheriff. Don't believe her. I had nothing to do with it. It was all her work. She seems to put the words of the song in my mouth, but I assure you on my sacred honor, it was all of her own getting up.

All. Let's hear the song.

Colin. I maun turn in wi' the crowd, Sherra. So we'll hear the sang, Meestress Girty. I'll gang your surety against a' damage and divoorce. There's nae a Scotchman in the warl but loves a sang. Sing on, Meestress Girty.

Molly. Shall I, husband?

Mother Madden. I will answer for him. There is no getting out of it. Thee must sing the new song.

Children. That's good, grandma. Now the song.

Molly. Phineas, it's the first time we have differed. You must consent, or they will all be disappointed. Let us leave this dispute to arbitration.

Sheriff. Agreed. Let Aunt Deborah decide.

Children. Good—good. Aunt Deborah, decide for us.

Deborah. I have all confidence in Molly. If she has written a song, it must be good.

Sheriff. Don't believe it. It's all bosh.

Deborah. Molly, thee will favor us with the song.

SONG.

The lawyer's nothing but a drudge,
His musty volumes reading;
Before the jury and the Judge,
He splits his throat a pleading;
No time has he for social glee,
Or with a friend be jolly;
And little knows how sweetly flows
The tide with me and Molly.

The doctor has no hour his own,
His daily circuit keeping;
He leaves his dinner half-way done,
And finds no time for sleeping;
He frets his brain to ease the pain
Of gout or melancholly;
And never knows how sweetly flows
The tide with me and Molly.

There's not a man in all the land,
Of high or low profession,
But tries his hand for something grand,
Denied to his possession.
So let the fruitless strife go on,
Time will disclose the folly;
They never know how sweetly flow
The hours with me and Molly.

My wife and I sit by the grate,
The baby round us creeping;
The bigger youngsters raising Ned
With frolic-shouts and leaping;
"Two look like pa, and *three* like *ma*,"
(Says their attendant Dolly,)
But howsoe'er their looks appear,
They're dear to me and Molly.

Bright blush the rose at Antioch,
The passing breeze perfuming;
Where sunlight falls within her walls,
The flow'rs of love are blooming;
And ever green the juniper,
The laurel and the holly;
For JUNIPER and ANTIOCH
Are dear to me and Molly.

THE END.

